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THE GIFT OF
VICTOR EMANUEL
OF THE CLASS OF 1919

Ridgway
1828
v. 2



D O N J U A N.

“Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?—Yes, by St. Anne; and ginger shall be hot i’ the mouth too!”—*Twelfth Night; or What you Will.* SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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DON JUAN.

CANTO VII.

I.

O LOVE! O Glory! what are ye who fly
Around us ever, rarely to alight?
There's not a meteor in the polar sky
Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.
Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift on high
Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
A thousand and a thousand colours they
Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

II.

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
A non-descript and ever-varying rhyme,
A versified Aurora Borealis,
Which flashes o'er a waste and icy clime.
When we know what all are, we must bewail us,
But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime
To laugh at *all* things—for I wish to know
What, after *all*, are *all* things—but a *show*?

III.

They accuse me—*Me*—the present writer of
The present poem—of—I know not what—
A tendency to underrate and scoff

At human power and virtue, and all that;
And this they say in language rather rough.

Good God! I wonder what they would be at!
I say no more than hath been said in Dante's
Verse, and by Solomon and Cervantes;

IV.

By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,
By Fenelon, by Luther, and by Plato;
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,
Who knew this life was not worth a potato.
'Tis not their fault, nor mine, if this be so—
For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,
Nor even Diogenes.—We live and die,
But which is best, you know no more than I.

V.

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
"To know that nothing could be known;" a pleasant
Science enough, which levels to an ass
Each man of wisdom, future, past, or present.
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!
Declared, with all his grand discoveries recent,
That he himself felt only "like a youth
Picking up shells by the great ocean—Truth."

VI.

Ecclesiastes said, "that all is vanity"—

Most modern preachers say the same, or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:

In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,

By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by poet,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,
From holding up the nothingness of life?

VII.

Dogs, or men! (for I flatter you in saying

That ye are dogs—your betters far) ye may
Read, or read not, what I am now essaying

To show ye what ye are in every way.
As little as the moon stops for the baying

Of wolves, will the bright muse withdraw one ray
From out her skies—then howl your idle wrath!
While she still silvers o'er your gloomy path.

VIII.

"Fierce loves and faithless wars"—I am not sure

If this be the right reading—'tis no matter;
The fact's about the same, I am secure;

I sing them both, and am about to batter
A town which did a famous siege endure,

And was beleaguer'd both by land and water
By Souvaroff, or Anglicè Suwarrow,
Who loved blood as an alderman loves marrow.

IX.

The fortress is call'd Ismail, and is placed
Upon the Danube's left branch and left bank,
With buildings in the oriental taste,
But still a fortress of the foremost rank,
Or was at least, unless 'tis since defaced,
Which with your conquerors is a common prank:
It stands some eighty versts from the high sea,
And measures round of toises thousands three.

X.

Within the extent of this fortification
A borough is comprised along the height
Upon the left, which from its loftier station
Commands the city, and upon its site
A Greek had raised around this elevation
A quantity of palisades *upright*,
So placed as to *impede* the fire of those
Who held the place, and to *assist* the foe's.

XI.

This circumstance may serve to give a notion
Of the high talents of this new Vauban:
But the town ditch below was deep as ocean,
The rampart higher than you'd wish to hang:
But then there was a great want of precaution
(Prithee, excuse this engineering slang),
Nor work advanced, nor cover'd way was there,
To hint at least "Here is no thoroughfare."

XII.

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,
And walls as thick as most skulls born as yet;
Two batteries, cap-a-pee, as our St. George,
Case-mated one, and t'other "à barbette,"
Of Danube's bank took formidable charge;
While two and twenty cannon duly set
Rose over the town's right side, in bristling tier,
Forty feet high, upon a cavalier.

XIII.

But from the river the town's open quite,
Because the Turks could never be persuaded
A Russian vessel e'er would heave in sight;
And such their creed was, till they were invaded,
When it grew rather late to set things right.
But as the Danube could not well be waded,
They look'd upon the Muscovite flotilla,
And only shouted, "Allah!" and "Bis Millah!"

XIV.

The Russians now were ready to attack;
But oh, ye goddesses of war and glory!
How shall I spell the name of each Cossacque
Who were immortal, could one tell their story?
Alas! what to their memory can lack?
Achilles' self was not more grim and gory
Than thousands of this new and polish'd nation,
Whose names want nothing but—pronunciation.

XV.

Still I'll record a few, if but to increase

Our euphony—there was Strongenoff, and Strokonoff,
Meknop, Serge Lwdw, Arseniew of modern Greece,
And Tschitsshakoff, and Roguenoff, and Chokenoff,
And others of twelve consonants a-piece;

And more might be found out, if I could poke enough
Into gazettes; but Fame (capricious strumpet),
It seems, has got an ear as well as trumpet,

XVI.

And cannot tune those discords of narration,

Which may be names at Moscow, into rhyme;
Yet there were several worth commemoration,

As e'er was virgin of a nuptial chime;
Soft words too, fitted for the peroration

Of Londonderry, drawling against time,
Ending in "ischskin," "ouskin," "iffskchy," "ouski,"
Of whom we can insert but Rousamouski,

XVII.

Scherematoff and Chrematoff, Koklopti,

Koclobski, Kourakin, and Mouskin Pouskin,
All proper men of weapons, as e'er scoff'd high
Against a foe, or ran a sabre through skin:
Little cared they for Mahomet or Mufti,

Unless to make their kettle-drums a new skin
Out of their hides, if parchment had grown dear,
And no more handy substitute been near.

XVIII.

Then there were foreigners of much renown,
Of various nations, and all volunteers;
Not fighting for their country or its crown,
But wishing to be one day brigadiers:
Also to have the sacking of a town;
A pleasant thing to young men at their years.
'Mongst them were several Englishmen of pith,
Sixteen call'd Thomson, and nineteen named Smith.

XIX.

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson;—all the rest
Had been call'd "*Jemmy*," after the great bard;
I don't know whether they had arms or crest,
But such a godfather's as good a card.
Three of the Smiths were Peters; but the best
Amongst them all, hard blows to inflict or ward,
Was *he*, since so renown'd "in country quarters
At Halifax;" but now he served the Tartars.

XX.

The rest were Jacks and Gills and Wills and Bills;
But when I've added that the elder Jack Smith
Was born in Cumberland among the hills,
And that his father was an honest blacksmith,
I've said all *I* know of a name that fills
Three lines of the despatch in taking "*Schmacksmith*,"
A village of Moldavia's waste, wherein
He fell, immortal in a bulletin.

XXI.

I wonder (although Mars no doubt's a god I
Praise) if a man's name in a *bulletin*
May make up for a *bullet* in his body?
I hope this little question is no sin,
Because, though I am but a simple noddie,
I think one Shakspeare puts the same thought in
The mouth of some one in his plays so doting,
Which many people pass for wits by quoting.

XXII.

Then there were Frenchmen, gallant, young, and gay:
But I'm too great a patriot to record
Their Gallic names upon a glorious day;
I'd rather tell ten lies than say a word
Of truth;—such truths are treason; they betray
Their country; and as traitors are abhorr'd
Who name the French in English, save to show
How Peace should make John Bull the Frenchman's foe.

XXIII.

The Russians, having built two batteries on
An isle near Ismail, had two ends in view;
The first was to bombard it, and knock down
The public buildings and the private too,
No matter what poor souls might be undone.
The city's shape suggested this, 'tis true;
Form'd like an amphitheatre, each dwelling
Presented a fine mark to throw a shell in.

XXIV.

The second object was to profit by

The moment of the general consternation,
To attack the Turk's flotilla, which lay nigh
Extremely tranquil, anchor'd at its station:

But a third motive was as probably

To frighten them into capitulation;
A phantasy which sometimes seizes warriors,
Unless they are game as bull-dogs and fox-terriers.

XXV.

A habit rather blamable, which is

That of despising those we combat with,
Common in many cases, was in this

The cause of killing Tchitchitzkoff and Smith;
One of the valorous "Smiths" whom we shall miss

Out of those nineteen who late rhymed to "pith;"
But 'tis a name so spread o'er "Sir" and "Madam,"
That one would think the first who bore it "Adam."

XXVI.

The Russian batteries were incomplete,

Because they were constructed in a hurry;
Thus the same cause which makes a verse want feet,
And throws a cloud o'er Longman and John Murray,
When the sale of new books is not so fleet

As they who print them think is necessary,
May likewise put off for a time what story
Sometimes calls "murder," and at others "glory."

XXVII.

Whether it was their engineer's stupidity,
Their haste, or waste, I neither know nor care,
Or some contractor's personal cupidity,
Saving his soul by cheating in the ware
Of homicide, but there was no solidity
In the new batteries erected there;
They either miss'd, or they were never miss'd,
And added greatly to the missing list.

XXVIII.

A sad miscalculation about distance
Made all their naval matters incorrect;
Three fireships lost their amiable existence
Before they reach'd a spot to take effect:
The match was lit too soon, and no assistance
Could remedy this lubberly defect;
They blew up in the middle of the river,
While, though 'twas dawn, the Turks slept fast as ever.

XXIX.

At seven they rose, however, and survey'd
The Russ flotilla getting under way;
'Twas nine, when still advancing undismay'd,
Within a cable's length their vessels lay
Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
Which was return'd with interest, I may say,
And by a fire of musketry and grape,
And shells and shot of every size and shape.

XXX.

For six hours bore they without intermission
The Turkish fire, and aided by their own
Land batteries, work'd their guns with great precision:
At length they found mere cannonade alone
By no means would produce the town's submission,
And made a signal to retreat at one.
One bark blew up, a second near the works
Running aground, was taken by the Turks.

XXXI.

The Moslem too had lost both ships and men;
But when they saw the enemy retire,
Their Delhis mann'd some boats, and sail'd again,
And gall'd the Russians with a heavy fire,
And tried to make a landing on the main;
But here the effect fell short of their desire:
Count Damas drove them back into the water
Pell mell, and with a whole gazette of slaughter.

XXXII.

"If" (says the historian here) "I could report
All that the Russians did upon this day,
I think that several volumes would fall short,
And I should still have many things to say;"
And so he says no more—but pays his court
To some distinguish'd strangers in that fray;
The Prince de Ligne, and Langeron, and Damas,
Names great as any that the roll of Fame has.

XXXIII.

This being the case, may show us what fame *is* :

For out of these three "*preux Chevaliers*," how
Many of common readers give a guess

That such existed? (and they may live now
For aught we know.) Renown's all hit or miss;

There's fortune even in fame, we must allow.
'Tis true, the Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne
Have half withdrawn from *him* oblivion's screen.

XXXIV.

But here are men who fought in gallant actions

As gallantly as ever heroes fought,
But buried in the heap of such transactions

Their names are rarely found, nor often sought.
Thus even good fame may suffer sad contractions,

And is extinguish'd sooner than she ought:
Of all our modern battles, I will bet
You can't repeat nine names from each Gazette.

XXXV.

In short, this last attack, though rich in glory,

Show'd that *somewhere, somehow*, there was a fault,
And Admiral Ribas (known in Russian story)

Most strongly recommended an assault;
In which he was opposed by young and hoary,
Which made a long debate; but I must halt,
For if I wrote down every warrior's speech,
I doubt few readers e'er would mount the breach.

XXXVI.

There was a man, if that he was a man,
Not that his manhood could be call'd in question,
For had he not been Hercules, his span
Had been as short in youth as indigestion
Made his last illness, when, all worn and wan,
He died beneath a tree, as much unblest on
The soil of the green province he had wasted,
As e'er was locust on the land it blasted.

XXXVII.

This was Potemkin—a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made great;
If stars and titles could entail long praise,
His glory might half equal his estate.
This fellow, being six foot high, could raise
A kind of phantasy proportionate
In the then sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a steeple.

XXXVIII.

While things were in abeyance, Ribas sent
A courier to the prince, and he succeeded
In ordering matters after his own bent;
I cannot tell the way in which he pleaded,
But shortly he had cause to be content.
In the mean time, the batteries proceeded,
And fourscore cannon on the Danube's border
Were briskly fired and answer'd in due order.

XXXIX.

But on the thirteenth, when already part
Of the troops were embark'd, the siege to raise,
A courier on the spur inspired new heart
Into all panthers for newspaper praise,
As well as dilettanti in war's art,
By his despatches couch'd in pithy praise;
Announcing the appointment of that lover of
Battles to the command, Field Marshal Souvaroff.

XL.

The letter of the prince to the same marshal
Was worthy of a Spartan, had the cause
Been one to which a good heart could be partial—
Defence of freedom, country, or of laws;
But as it was mere lust of power to o'er-arch all
With its proud brow, it merits slight applause,
Save for its style, which said, all in a trice,
"You will take Ismail at whatever price."

XLI.

"Let there be light! said God, and there was light!"
"Let there be blood!" says man, and there's a sea!
The fiat of this spoil'd child of the Night
(For Day ne'er saw his merits) could decree
More evil in an hour, than thirty bright
Summers could renovate, though they should be
Lovely as those which ripen'd Eden's fruit;
For war cuts up not only branch, but root,

XLII.

Our friends the Turks, who with loud "Allahs" now
Began to signalize the Russ retreat,
Were damnably mistaken; few are slow
In thinking that their enemy is beat
(Or *beaten*, if *you* insist on grammar, though
I never think about it in a heat),
But here I say the Turks were much mistaken,
Who hating hogs, yet wish'd to save their bacon.

XLIII.

For, on the sixteenth, at full gallop, drew
In sight two horsemen, who were deem'd Cossacques
For some time, till they came in nearer view.
They had but little baggage at their backs,
For there were but *three* shirts between the two;
But on they rode upon two Ukraine hacks,
Till, in approaching, were at length descried
In this plain pair, Suwarrow and his guide.

XLIV.

"Great joy to London now!" says some great fool,
When London had a grand illumination,
Which to that bottle-conjuror, John Bull,
Is of all dreams the first hallucination;
So that the streets of colour'd lamps are full,
That Sage (*said* John) surrenders at discretion
His purse, his soul, his sense, and even his nonsense,
To gratify, like a huge moth, this *one* sense.

XLV.

'Tis strange that he should farther "damn his eyes,"

For they are damn'd; that once all-famous oath
Is to the devil now no farther prize,

Since John has lately lost the use of both.
Debt he calls wealth, and taxes Paradise;

And Famine, with her gaunt and bony growth,
Which stare him in the face, he won't examine,
Or swears that Ceres hath begotten Famine.

XLVI.

But to the tale;—great joy unto the camp!

To Russian, Tartar, English, French, Cossacque,
O'er whom Suwarrow shone like a gas lamp,

Presaging a most luminous attack;
Or like a wisp along the marsh so damp,

Which leads beholders on a boggy walk,
He flitted to and fro a dancing light,
Which all who saw it follow'd, wrong or right.

XLVII.

But certes matters took a different face;

There was enthusiasm and much applause,
The fleet and camp saluted with great grace,
And all presaged good fortune to their cause.
Within a cannon-shot length of the place

They drew, constructed ladders, repair'd flaws
In former works, made new, prepared fascines,
And all kinds of benevolent machines.

XLVIII.

'Tis thus the spirit of a single mind
Makes that of multitudes take one direction,
As roll the waters to the breathing wind,
Or roams the herd beneath the bull's protection;
Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
Or a bell-wether form the flock's connexion
By tinkling sounds, when they go forth to victual;
Such is the sway of your great men o'er little.

XLIX.

The whole camp rung with joy; you would have thought
That they were going to a marriage feast
(This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught,
Since there is discord after both at least):
There was not now a luggage boy but sought
Danger and spoil with ardour much increased;
And why? because a little—odd—old man,
Stript to his shirt, was come to lead the van.

L.

But so it was; and every preparation
Was made with all alacrity: the first
Detachment of three columns took its station,
And waited but the signal's voice to burst
Upon the foe: the second's ordination
Was also in three columns, with a thirst
For glory gaping o'er a sea of slaughter:
The third, in columns two, attack'd by water.

LI.

New batteries were erected, and was held
A general council, in which unanimity,
That stranger to most councils, here prevail'd,
As sometimes happens in a great extremity;
And every difficulty being dispell'd,
Glory began to dawn with due sublimity,
While Souvaroff, determined to obtain it,
Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet *.

LII.

It is an actual fact, that he, commander
In chief, in proper person deign'd to drill
The awkward squad, and could afford to squander
His time, a corporal's duty to fulfil;
Just as you'd break a sucking salamander
To swallow flame, and never take it ill:
He show'd them how to mount a ladder (which
Was not like Jacob's) or to cross a ditch.

LIII.

Also he dress'd up, for the nonce, fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars, and dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these machines,
By way of lesson against actual Turks;
And when well practised in these mimic scenes,
He judg'd them proper to assail the works;
At which your wise men sneer'd in phrases witty:
He made no answer; but he took the city.

* Fact: Souvaroff did this in person.

LIV.

Most things were in this posture on the eve
Of the assault, and all the camp was in
A stern repose; which you would scarce conceive;
Yet men resolved to dash through thick and thin
Are very silent when they once believe
That all is settled:—there was little din,
For some were thinking of their home and friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

LV.

Suwarrow chiefly was on the alert,
Surveying, drilling, ordering, jesting, pondering;
For the man was, we safely may assert,
A thing to wonder at beyond most wondering;
Hero, buffoon, half-demon, and half-dirt,
Praying, instructing, desolating, plundering;
Now Mars, now Momus; and when bent to storm
A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

LVI.

The day before the assault, while upon drill—
For this great conqueror play'd the corporal—
Some Cossacques, hovering like hawks round a hill,
Had met a party towards the twilight's fall,
One of whom spoke their tongue—or well or ill,
'Twas much that he was understood at all;
But whether from his voice, or speech, or manner,
They found that he had fought beneath their banner.

LVII.

Whereon immediately at his request

They brought him and his comrades to head-quarters;
Their dress was Moslem, but you might have guess'd

That these were merely masquerading Tartars,
And that beneath each Turkish-fashioned vest

Lurk'd Christianity; which sometimes barter
Her inward grace for outward show, and makes
It difficult to shun some strange mistakes.

LVIII.

Suwarrow, who was standing in his shirt

Before a company of Calmucks, drilling,
Exclaiming, fooling, swearing at the inert,

And lecturing on the noble art of killing,—
For deeming human clay but common dirt,

This great philosopher was thus instilling
His maxims, which to martial comprehension
Proved death in battle equal to a pension;—

LIX.

Suwarrow, when he saw this company

Of Cossacques and their prey, turn'd round and cast
Upon them his slow brow and piercing eye:—

“Whence come ye?”—“From Constantinople last,
Captives just now escaped,” was the reply.

“What are ye?”—“What you see us.” Briefly pass'd
This dialogue; for he who answer'd knew
To whom he spoke, and made his words but few.

LX.

"Your names?"—"Mine's Johnson, and my comrade's

The other two are women, and the third [Juan;
Is neither man nor woman." The chief threw on

The party a slight glance, then said: "I have heard
Your name before, the second is a new one:

To bring the other three here was absurd:
But let that pass:—I think I have heard your name
In the Nikolaiew regiment?"—"The same."

LXI.

"You served at Widin?"—"Yes."—"You led the attack?"

"I did."—"What next?"—"I really hardly know."

"You were the first i' the breach?"—"I was not slack

At least to follow those who might be so."

"What follow'd?"—"A shot laid me on my back,

And I became a prisoner to the foe."

"You shall have vengeance, for the town surrounded
Is twice as strong as that where you were wounded.

LXII.

"Where will you serve?"—"Where'er you please."—"I

You like to be the hope of the forlorn, [know
And doubtless would be foremost on the foe

After the hardships you've already borne.
And this young fellow—say what can he do?

He with the beardless chin and garments torn?"

"Why, general, if he hath no greater fault
In war than love, he had better lead the assault."

LXIII.

“He shall if that he dare.” Here Juan bow’d
Low as the compliment deserved. Suwarrow
Continued: “Your old regiment’s allow’d,
By special providence, to lead to-morrow,
Or it may be to-night, the assault: I have vow’d
To several saints, that shortly plough or harrow
Shall pass o’er what was Ismail, and its tusk
Be unimpeded by the proudest mosque.

LXIV.

“So now, my lads, for glory!”—Here he turn’d
And drill’d away in the most classic Russian,
Until each high, heroic bosom burn’d
For cash and conquest, as if from a cushion
A preacher had held forth (who nobly spurn’d
All earthly goods save tithes) and bade them push on
To slay the Pagans who resisted, battering
The armies of the Christian Empress Catherine.

LXV.

Johnson, who knew by this long colloquy
Himself a favourite, ventured to address
Suwarrow, though engaged with accents high
In his resumed amusement. “I confess
My debt in being thus allow’d to die
Among the foremost; but if you’d express
Explicitly our several posts, my friend
And self would know what duty to attend.”

LXVI.

“Right! I was busy, and forgot. Why, you
Will join your former regiment, which should be
Now under arms. Ho! Katskoff, take him to—
(Here he call’d up a Polish orderly)
His post, I mean the regiment Nikolaiew:
The stranger stripling may remain with me;
He’s a fine boy. The women may be sent
To the other baggage, or to the sick tent.”

LXVII.

But here a sort of scene began to ensue:
The ladies,—who by no means had been bred
To be disposed of in a way so new,
Although their haram education led
Doubtless to that of doctrines the most true,
Passive obedience,—now raised up the head,
With flashing eyes and starting tears, and flung
Their arms, as hens their wings about their young,

LXVIII.

O’er the promoted couple of brave men
Who were thus honour’d by the greatest chief
That ever peopled hell with heroes slain,
Or plunged a province or a realm in grief.
Oh, foolish mortals! Always taught in vain!
Oh, glorious laurel! since for one sole leaf
Of thine imaginary deathless tree,
Of blood and tears must flow the unebbing sea.

LXIX.

Suwarrow, who had small regard for tears,
And not much sympathy for blood, survey'd
The women with their hair about their ears
And natural agonies, with a slight shade
Of feeling: for however habit sears
Men's hearts against whole millions, when their trade
Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
Will touch even heroes—and such was Suwarrow.

LXX.

He said,—and in the kindest Calmuck tone,—
“Why, Johnson, what the devil do you mean
By bringing women here? They shall be shown
All the attention possible, and seen
In safety to the waggons, where alone
In fact they can be safe. You should have been
Aware this kind of baggage never thrives:
Save wed a year, I hate recruits with wives.”

LXXI.

“May it please your excellency,” thus replied
Our British friend, “these are the wives of others,
And not our own. I am too qualified
By service with my military brothers
To break the rules by bringing one's own bride
Into a camp: I know that nought so bothers
The hearts of the heroic on a charge,
As leaving a small family at large.

LXXII.

“But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
With their attendant aided our escape,
And afterwards accompanied us through
A thousand perils in this dubious shape.
To me this kind of life is not so new;
To them, poor things, it is an awkward step:
I therefore, if you wish me to fight freely,
Request that they may both be used genteelly.”

LXXIII.

Meantime these two poor girls, with swimming eyes,
Look'd on as if in doubt if they could trust
Their own protectors; nor was their surprise
Less than their grief (and truly not less just)
To see an old man, rather wild than wise
In aspect, plainly clad, besmeared with dust,
Stript to his waistcoat, and *that not* too clean,
More fear'd than all the sultans ever seen.

LXXIV.

For every thing seem'd resting on his nod,
As they could read in all eyes. Now to them,
Who were accusom'd, as a sort of god,
To see the sultan, rich in many a gem,
Like an imperial peacock stalk abroad
(That royal bird, whose tail's a diadem),
With all the pomp of power, it was a doubt
How power could condescend to do without.

LXXV.

John Johnson, seeing their extreme dismay,
Though little versed in feelings oriental,
Suggested some slight comfort in his way:

Don Juan, who was much more sentimental,
Swore they should see him by the dawn of day,
Or that the Russian army should repent all:
And, strange to say, they found some consolation
In this—for females like exaggeration.

LXXVI.

And then with tears, and sighs, and some slight kisses,

They parted for the present—these to await,
According to the artillery's hits or misses,

What sages call Chance, Providence, or Fate—
(Uncertainty is one of many blisses,

A mortgage on Humanity's estate)—

While their beloved friends began to arm,
To burn a town which never did them harm.

LXXVII.

Suwarrow,—who but saw things in the gross,
Being much too gross to see them in detail,

Who calculated life as so much dross,

And as the wind a widow'd nation's wail,
And cared as little for his army's loss

(So that their efforts should at length prevail)
As wife and friends did for the boils of Job,—
What was't to him to hear two women sob?

LXXVIII.

Nothing.—The work of glory still went on
In preparations for a cannonade
As terrible as that of Ilion,
If Homer had found mortars ready made;
But now, instead of slaying Priam's son,
We only can but talk of escalade,
Bombs, drums, guns, bastions, batteries, bayonets, bullets;
Hard words, which stick in the soft Muses' gullets.

LXXIX.

Oh, thou eternal Homer! who couldst charm
All ears, though long; all ages, though so short,
By merely wielding with poetic arm
Arms to which men will never more resort,
Unless gunpowder should be found to harm
Much less than is the hope of every court,
Which now is leagued young Freedom to annoy;
But they will not find Liberty a Troy:—

LXXX.

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now
To paint a siege, wherein more men were slain,
With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
Than in thy Greek gazette of that campaign;
And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
To vie with thee would be about as vain
As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;
But still we moderns equal you in blood;

LXXXI.

If not in poetry, at least in fact;
And fact is truth, the grand desideratum!
Of which, howe'er the Muse describes each act,
There should be ne'ertheless a slight substratum.
But now the town is going to be attack'd;
Great deeds are doing—how shall I relate 'em?
Souls of immortal generals! Phœbus watches
To colour up his rays from your despatches.

LXXXII.

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!
Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd and wounded!
Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,
When my poor Greece was once, as now, surrounded!
Oh, Cæsar's Commentaries! now impart, ye
Shadows of glory! (lest I be confounded)
A portion of your fading twilight hues,
So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

LXXXIII.

When I call "fading" martial immortality,
I mean, that every age and every year,
And almost every day, in sad reality,
Some sucking hero is compell'd to rear,
Who, when we come to sum up the totality
Of deeds to human happiness most dear,
Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

LXXXIV.

Medals, ranks, ribands, lace, embroidery, scarlet,
Are things immortal to immortal man,
As purple to the Babylonian harlot:
An uniform to boys is like a fan
To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet
But deems himself the first in Glory's van.
But Glory's glory; and if you would find
What that is—ask the pig who sees the wind!

LXXXV.

At least *he feels it*, and some say he *sees*,
Because he runs before it like a pig;
Or, if that simple sentence should displease,
Say, that he scuds before it like a brig,
A schooner, or—but it is time to ease
This Canto, ere my Muse perceives fatigue.
The next shall ring a peal to shake all people,
Like a bob-major from a village steeple.

LXXXVI.

Hark! through the silence of the cold, dull night,
The hum of armies gathering rank on rank!
Lo! dusky masses steal in dubious sight
Along the leaguer'd wall and bristling bank
Of the arm'd river, while with straggling light
The stars peep through the vapours dim and dank,
Which curl in curious wreaths—How soon the smoke
Of Hell shall pall them in a deeper cloak!

LXXXVII.

Here pause we for the present—as even then
That awful pause, dividing life from death,
Struck for an instant on the hearts of men,
Thousands of whom were drawing their last breath!
A moment—and all will be life again!
The march! the charge! the shouts of either faith!
Hurra! and Allah! and—one moment more—
The death-cry drowning in the battle's roar.

DON JUAN.

CANTO VIII.

I.

OH blood and thunder! and oh blood and wounds!

These are but vulgar oaths, as you may deem,
Too gentle reader! and most shocking sounds:

And so they are; yet thus is Glory's dream
Unriddled, and as my true Muse expounds

At present such things, since they are her theme,
So be they her inspirers! Call them Mars,
Bellona, what you will—they mean but wars.

II.

All was prepared—the fire, the sword, the men

To wield them in their terrible array.

The army, like a lion from his den,

March'd forth with nerve and sinews bent to slay,—
A human Hydra, issuing from its fen

To breathe destruction on its winding way,
Whose heads were heroes, which cut off in vain
Immediately in others grew again.

III.

History can only take things in the gross;
But could we know them in detail, perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,
War's merit it by no means might enhance,
To waste so much gold for a little dross,
As hath been done, mere conquest to advance.
The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

IV.

And why?—because it brings self-approbation;
Whereas the other, after all its glare,
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a nation,
Which (it may be) has not much left to spare,
A higher title, or a loftier station,
Though they may make Corruption gape or stare,
Yet, in the end, except in freedom's battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles.

V.

And such they are—and such they will be found:
Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds undone.
How sweetly on the ear such echoes sound!
While the mere victor's may appal or stun
The servile and the vain, such names will be
A watchword till the future shall be free.

VI.

The night was dark, and the thick mist allow'd
Nought to be seen save the artillery's flame,
Which arch'd the horizon like a fiery cloud,
And in the Danube's waters shone the same—
A mirror'd Hell! the volleying roar, and loud
Long booming of each peal on peal, o'ercame
The ear far more than thunder; for Heaven's flashes
Spare, or smite rarely—Man's make millions ashes!

VII.

The column order'd on the assault scarce pass'd
Beyond the Russian batteries a few toises,
When up the bristling Moslem rose at last,
Answering the Christian thunders with like voices;
Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream embraced,
Which rock'd as 'twere beneath the mighty noises;
While the whole rampart blazed like Etna, when
The restless Titan hiccups in his den.

VIII.

And one enormous shout of "Allah!" rose
In the same moment, loud as even the roar
Of war's most mortal engines, to their foes
Hurling defiance: city, stream, and shore
Resounded "Allah!" and the clouds which close
With thick'ning canopy the conflict o'er,
Vibrate to the Eternal name. Hark! through
All sounds it pierceth "Allah! Allah! Hu!"⁽¹⁾

IX.

The columns were in movement one and all,

But of the portion which attack'd by water,
Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,

Though led by Arseniew, that great son of slaughter,
As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball. [daughter:"⁽²⁾

"Carnage" (so Wordsworth tells you) "is God's
If *he* speak truth, she is Christ's sister, and
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

X.

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the knee;

Count Chapeau-Bras too had a ball between
His cap and head, which proves the head to be
Aristocratic as was ever seen,

Because it then received no injury

More than the cap; in fact, the ball could mean
No harm unto a right legitimate head:
"Ashes to ashes"—why not lead to lead?

XI.

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,

Insisting on removal of *the prince*
Amidst some groaning thousands dying near,—

All common fellows, who might writhe and wince,
And shriek for water into a deaf ear,—

The General Markow, who could thus evince
His sympathy for rank, by the same token,
To teach him greater, had his own leg broken.

XII.

Three hundred cannon threw up their emetic,
And thirty thousand muskets flung their pills
Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.

Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills;
Thy plagues, thy famines, thy physicians, yet tick,
Like the death-watch, within our ears the ills
Past, present, and to come;—but all may yield
To the true portrait of one battle-field.

XIII.

There the still varying pangs, which multiply
Until their very number makes men hard
By the infinities of agony,
Which meet the gaze, whate'er it may regard—
The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white eye
Turn'd back within its socket,—these reward
Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest
May win perhaps a riband at the breast!

XIV.

Yet I love glory;—glory's a great thing:—
Think what it is to be in your old age
Maintain'd at the expense of your good king:
A moderate pension shakes full many a sage,
And heroes are but made for bards to sing,
Which is still better; thus in verse to wage
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth destroying.

XV.

The troops, already disembark'd, push'd on
To take a battery on the right; the others,
Who landed lower down, their landing done,
Had set to work as briskly as their brothers:
Being grenadiers, they mounted one by one,
Cheerful as children climb the breasts of mothers,
O'er the entrenchment and the palisade,
Quite orderly, as if upon parade.

XVI.

And this was admirable; for so hot
The fire was, that were red Vesuvius loaded,
Besides its lava, with all sorts of shot
And shells or hells, it could not more have goaded.
Of officers a third fell on the spot,
A thing which victory by no means boded
To gentlemen engaged in the assault:
Hounds, when the huntsman tumbles, are at fault.

XVII.

But here I leave the general concern,
To track our hero on his path of fame:
He must his laurels separately earn;
For fifty thousand heroes, name by name,
Though all deserving equally to turn
A couplet, or an elegy to claim,
Would form a lengthy lexicon of glory,
And what is worse still, a much longer story:

XVIII.

And therefore we must give the greater number
To the Gazette—which doubtless fairly dealt
By the deceased, who lie in famous slumber
In ditches, fields, or wheresoe'er they felt
Their clay for the last time their souls encumber;—
Thrice happy he whose name has been well spelt
In the despatch: I knew a man whose loss
Was printed *Grove*, although his name was Grose.⁽³⁾

XIX.

Juan and Johnson join'd a certain corps,
And fought away with might and main, not knowing
The way which they had never trod before,
And still less guessing where they might be going;
But on they march'd, dead bodies trampling o'er,
Firing, and thrusting, slashing, sweating, glowing,
But fighting thoughtlessly enough to win,
To their *two* selves, *one* whole bright bulletin.

XX.

Thus on they wallow'd in the bloody mire
Of dead and dying thousands,—sometimes gaining
A yard or two of ground, which brought them nigher
To some odd angle for which all were straining;
At other times, repulsed by the close fire,
Which really pour'd as if all hell were raining
Instead of heaven, they stumbled backwards o'er
A wounded comrade, sprawling in his gore,

XXI.

Though 't was Don Juan's first of fields, and though
The nightly muster and the silent march
In the chill dark, when courage does not glow
So much as under a triumphal arch,
Perhaps might make him shiver, yawn, or throw
A glance on the dull clouds (as thick as starch,
Which stiffen'd heaven) as if he wish'd for day;—
Yet for all this he did not run away.

XXII.

Indeed he could not. But what if he had?
There *have been* and *are* heroes who begun
With something not much better, or as bad:
Frederic the Great from Molwitz deign'd to run,
For the first and last time; for, like a pad,
Or hawk, or bride, most mortals after one
Warm bout are broken into their new tricks,
And fight like fiends for pay or politics.

XXIII.

He was what Erin calls, in her sublime
Old Erse or Irish, or it may be *Punic*;—
(The antiquarians who can settle time,
Which settles all things, Roman, Greek, or Runic,
Swear that Pat's language sprung from the same clime
With Hannibal, and wears the Tyrian tunic
Of Dido's alphabet; and this is rational
As any other notion, and not national);— (4)

XXIV.

But Juan was quite "a broth of a boy,"
A thing of impulse and a child of song;
Now swimming in the sentiment of joy,
Or the *sensation* (if that phrase seem wrong),
And afterward, if he must needs destroy,
In such good company as always throng
To battles, sieges, and that kind of pleasure,
No less delighted to employ his leisure;

XXV.

But always without malice: if he warr'd
Or loved, it was with what we call "the best
Intentions," which form all mankind's *trump card*,
To be produced when brought up to the test.
The statesman, hero, harlot, lawyer—ward
Off each attack, when people are in quest
Of their designs, by saying they *meant well*;
'Tis pity "that such meaning should pave hell." (5)

XXVI.

I almost lately have begun to doubt
Whether hell's pavement—if it be so *paved*—
Must not have latterly been quite worn out,
Not by the numbers good intent hath saved,
But by the mass who go below without
Those ancient good intentions, which once shaved
And smooth'd the brimstone of that street of hell
Which bears the greatest likeness to Pall Mall.

XXVII.

Juan, by some strange chance, which oft divides
Warrior from warrior in their grim career,
Like chastest wives from constant husbands' sides
Just at the close of the first bridal year,
By one of those odd turns of Fortune's tides,
Was on a sudden rather puzzled here,
When, after a good deal of heavy firing,
He found himself alone, and friends retiring.

XXVIII.

I don't know how the thing occur'd—it might
Be that the greater part were kill'd or wounded,
And that the rest had faced unto the right
About; a circumstance which has confounded
Cæsar himself, who in the very sight
Of his whole army, which so much abounded
In courage, was obliged to snatch a shield,
And rally back his Romans to the field.

XXIX.

Juan, who had no shield to snatch, and was
No Cæsar, but a fine young lad, who fought
He knew not why, arriving at this pass,
Stopp'd for a minute, as perhaps he ought
For a much longer time; then, like an ass—
(Start not, kind reader, since great Homer thought
This simile enough for Ajax, Juan
Perhaps may find it better than a new one);—

XXX.

Then, like an ass, he went upon his way,
And, what was stranger, never look'd behind;
But seeing, flashing forward, like the day
Over the hills, a fire enough to blind
Those who dislike to look upon a fray,
He stumbled on, to try if he could find
A path, to add his own slight arm and forces
To corps, the greater part of which were corses.

XXXI.

Perceiving then no more the commandant
Of his own corps, nor even the corps, which had
Quite disappear'd—the gods know how! (I can't
Account for every thing which may look bad
In history; but we at least may grant
It was not marvellous that a mere lad,
In search of glory, should look on before,
Nor care a pinch of snuff about his corps):—

XXXII.

Perceiving nor commander nor commanded,
And left at large, like a young heir, to make
His way to—where he knew not—single handed;
As travellers follow over bog and brake
An “*ignis fatuus*,” or as sailors stranded
Unto the nearest hut themselves betake;
So Juan, following honour and his nose,
Rush'd where the thickest fire announc'd most foes.

XXXIII.

He knew not where he was, nor greatly cared,
For he was dizzy, busy, and his veins
Fill'd as with lightning—for his spirit shared
The hour, as is the case with lively brains;
And where the hottest fire was seen and heard,
And the loud cannon peal'd his hoarsest strains,
He rush'd, while earth and air were sadly shaken
By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon! (6)

XXXIV.

And as he rush'd along, it came to pass he
Fell in with what was late the second column,
Under the orders of the General Lascy,
But now reduced, as is a bulky volume
Into an elegant extract (much less massy)
Of heroism, and took his place with solemn
Air 'midst the rest, who kept their valiant faces
And levell'd weapons still against the glaci.

XXXV.

Just at this crisis up came Johnson too,
Who had "retreated," as the phrase is when
Men run away much rather, than go through
Destruction's jaws into the devil's den;
But Johnson was a clever fellow, who
Knew when and how "to cut and come again,"
And never ran away, except when running
Was nothing but a valorous kind of cunning.

XXXVI.

And so, when all his corps were dead or dying,
Except Don Juan, a mere novice, whose
More virgin valour never dreamt of flying,
From ignorance of danger, which induces
Its votaries, like innocence relying
On its own strength, with careless nerves and thews,—
Johnson retired a little, just to rally
Those who catch cold in “shadows of Death’s valley.”

XXXVII.

And there, a little shelter’d from the shot,
Which rain’d from bastion, battery, parapet,
Rampart, wall, casement, house—for there was not
In this extensive city, sore beset
By Christian soldiery, a single spot
Which did not combat like the devil, as yet,—
He found a number of Chasseurs, all scatter’d
By the resistance of the chase they batter’d.

XXXVIII.

And these he call’d on ; and, what’s strange, they came
Unto his call, unlike “the spirits from
The vasty deep,” to whom you may exclaim,
Says Hotspur, long ere they will leave their home.
Their reasons were uncertainty, or shame
At shrinking from a bullet or a bomb,
And that odd impulse, which in wars or creeds
Makes men, like cattle, follow him who leads.

XXXIX.

By Jove! he was a noble fellow, Johnson,
And though his name, than Ajax or Achilles,
Sounds less harmonious, underneath the sun soon
We shall not see his likeness: he could kill his
Man quite as quietly as blows the monsoon
Her steady breath (which some months the same *still* is):
Seldom he varied feature, hue, or muscle,
And could be very busy without bustle;

XL.

And therefore, when he ran away, he did so
Upon reflection, knowing that behind
He would find others who would fain be rid so
Of idle apprehensions, which like wind
Trouble heroic stomachs. Though their lids so
Oft are soon closed, all heroes are not blind,
But when they light upon immediate death,
Retire a little, merely to take breath.

XLI.

But Johnson only ran off, to return
With many other warriors, as we said,
Unto that rather somewhat misty bourn,
Which Hamlet tells us is a pass of dread.
To Jack howe'er this gave but slight concern:
His soul (like galvanism upon the dead)
Acted upon the living as on wire,
And led them back into the heaviest fire.

XLII.

Egad! they found the second time what they
The first time thought quite terrible enough
To fly from, *malgrè* all which people say
Of glory, and all that immortal stuff
Which fills a regiment (besides their pay,
That daily shilling which makes warriors tough)—
They found on their return the self-same welcome,
Which made some *think*, and others *know*, a *hell* come.

XLIII.

They fell as thick as harvests beneath hail,
Grass before scythes, or corn below the sickle,
Proving that trite old truth, that life's as frail
As any other boon for which men stickle.
The Turkish batteries thrash'd them like a flail
Or a good boxer, into a sad pickle,
Putting the very bravest, who were knock'd
Upon the head, before their guns were cock'd.

XLIV.

The Turks behind the traverses and flanks
Of the next bastion, fired away like devils,
And swept, as gales sweep foam away, whole ranks:
However, Heaven knows how, the Fate who levels
Towns, nations, worlds, in her revolving pranks,
So order'd it, amidst these sulphury revels,
That Johnson and some few who had not scamper'd,
Reach'd the interior talus of the rampart.

XLV.

First one or two, then five, six, and a dozen
Came mounting quickly up, for it was now
All neck or nothing, as, like pitch or rosin,
Flame was shower'd forth above, as well's below,
So that you scarce could say who best had chosen,
The gentlemen that were the first to show
Their martial faces on the parapet,
Or those who thought it brave to wait as yet.

XLVI.

But those who scaled, found out that their advance
Was favour'd by an accident or blunder:
The Greek or Turkish Cohorn's ignorance
Had pallisado'd in a way you'd wonder
To see in forts of Netherlands or France—
(Though these to our Gibraltar must knock under)—
Right in the middle of the parapet
Just named, these palisades were primly set:

XLVII.

So that on either side some nine or ten
Paces were left, whereon you could contrive
To march; a great convenience to our men,
At least to all those who were left alive,
Who thus could form a line and fight again;
And that which farther aided them to strive
Was, that they could kick down the palisades,
Which scarcely rose much higher than grass blades. (7)

XLVIII.

Among the first,—I will not say the *first*,
For such precedence upon such occasions
Will oftentimes make deadly quarrels burst
Out between friends as well as allied nations:
The Briton must be bold who really durst
Put to such trial John Bull's partial patience,
As say that Wellington at Waterloo
Was beaten,—though the Prussians say so too;—

XLIX.

And that if Blücher, Bulow, Gneisenau,
And God knows who besides in “au” and “ou,”
Had not come up in time to cast an awe
Into the hearts of those who fought till now
As tigers combat with an empty crow,
The Duke of Wellington had ceased to show
His orders, also to receive his pensions,
Which are the heaviest that our history mentions.

L.

But never mind;—“God save the king!” and kings!
For if *he* don't, I doubt if *men* will longer—
I think I hear a little bird, who sings
The people by and by will be the stronger:
The veriest jade will wince whose harness wrings
So much into the raw as quite to wrong her
Beyond the rules of posting,—and the mob
At last fall sick of imitating Job.

LI.

At first it grumbles, then it swears, and then,
Like David, flings smooth pebbles 'gainst a giant;
At last it takes to weapons such as men
Snatch when despair makes human hearts less pliant.
Then comes "the tug of war;"—'t will come again,
I rather doubt; and I would fain say "fie on't,"
If I had not perceived that Revolution
Alone can save the earth from hell's pollution.

LII.

But to continue;—I say not *the* first,
But of the first, our little friend Don Juan
Walk'd o'er the walls of Ismail, as if nursed
Amidst such scenes—though this was quite a new one
To him, and I should hope to *most*. The thirst
Of glory, which so pierces through and through one,
Pervaded him—although a generous creature,
As warm in heart as feminine in feature.

LIII.

And here he was—who upon woman's breast,
Even from a child, felt like a child; how'er
The man in all the rest might be confest,
To him it was Elysium to be there;
And he could even withstand that awkward test
Which Rousseau points out to the dubious fair,
"Observe your lover when he *leaves* your arms;"
But Juan never left them, while they had charms,

LIV.

Unless compell'd by fate, or wave, or wind,
Or near relations, who are much the same.
But *here* he was!—where each tie that can bind
Humanity must yield to steel and flame:
And *he* whose very body was all mind,
Flung here by fate or circumstance, which tame
The loftiest, hurried by the time and place,
Dash'd on like a spurr'd blood-horse in a race.

LV.

So was his blood stirr'd while he found resistance,
As is the hunter's at the five-bar gate,
Or double post and rail, where the existence
Of Britain's youth depends upon their weight,
The lightest being the safest: at a distance
He hated cruelty, as all men hate
Blood, until heated—and even there his own
At times would curdle o'er some heavy groan.

LVI.

The General Lascy, who had been hard press'd,
Seeing arrive an aid so opportune
As were some hundred youngsters all abreast,
Who came as if just dropp'd down from the moon,
To Juan, who was nearest him, address'd
His thanks, and hopes to take the city soon,
Not reckoning him to be a "base Bezonian,"
(As Pistol calls it) but a young Livonian.

LVII.

Juan, to whom he spoke in German, knew
As much of German as of Sanscrit, and
In answer made an inclination to
The general who held him in command;
For seeing one with ribands, black and blue,
Stars, medals, and a bloody sword in hand,
Addressing him in tones which seem'd to thank,
He recognized an officer of rank.

LVIII.

Short speeches pass between two men who speak
No common language; and besides, in time
Of war and taking towns, when many a shriek
Rings o'er the dialogue, and many a crime
Is perpetrated ere a word can break
Upon the ear, and sounds of horror chime
In like church-bells, with sigh, howl, groan, yell, prayer,
There cannot be much conversation there.

LIX.

And therefore all we have related in
Two long octaves, pass'd in a little minute;
But in the same small minute, every sin
Contrived to get itself comprised within it.
The very cannon, deafened by the din,
Grew dumb, for you might almost hear a linnet,
As soon as thunder, 'midst the general noise
Of human nature's agonizing voice!

LX.

The town was enter'd. Oh eternity!—

“God made the country, and man made the town,”
So Cowper says—and I begin to be

Of his opinion, when I see cast down
Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh,

All walls men know, and many never known;
And pondering on the present and the past,
To deem the woods shall be our home at last:—

LXI.

Of all men, saving Sylla the man-slayer,

Who passes for in life and death most lucky,
Of the great names which in our faces stare,

The General Boon, back-woodsman of Kentucky,
Was happiest amongst mortals any where;

For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
Enjoy'd the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

LXII.

Crime came not near him—she is not the child

Of solitude; Health shrank not from him—for
Her home is in the rarely trodden wild,

Where if men seek her not, and death be more
Their choice than life, forgive them, as beguiled

By habit to what their own hearts abhor—
In cities caged. The present case in point I
Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety;

LXIII.

And what 's still stranger, left behind a name
For which men vainly decimate the throng,
Not only famous, but of that *good* fame,
Without which glory's but a tavern song—
Simple, serene, the antipodes of shame,
Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge with wrong;
An active hermit, even in age the child
Of Nature, or the man of Ross run wild.

LXIV.

'Tis true he shrank from men even of his nation,
When they built up unto his darling trees,—
He moved some hundred miles off, for a station
Where there were fewer houses and more ease;
The inconvenience of civilization
Is, that you neither can be pleased nor please;
But where he met the individual man,
He show'd himself as kind as mortal can.

LXV.

He was not all alone: around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
Whose young, unawaken'd world was ever new,
Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a trace
On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you view
A frown on Nature's or on human face;—
The free-born forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

LXVI.

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain: the green woods were their portions;
No sinking spirits told them they grew gray,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions;
Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,
Though very true, were not yet used for trifles.

LXVII.

Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil;
Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers;
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil;
The lust which stings, the splendour which encumbers,
With the free foresters divide no spoil;
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

LXVIII.

So much for Nature:—by way of variety,
Now back to thy great joys, civilization!
And the sweet consequence of large society,
War, pestilence, the despot's desolation,
The kingly scourge, the lust of notoriety,
The millions slain by soldiers for their ration,
The scenes like Catherine's boudoir at threescore,
With Ismail's storm to soften it the more.

LXIX.

The town was enter'd: first one column made
Its sanguinary way good—then another;
The reeking bayonet and the flashing blade
Clash'd 'gainst the scimitar, and babe and mother
With distant shrieks were heard Heaven to upbraid:—
Still closer sulphury clouds began to smother
The breath of morn and man, where foot by foot
The madden'd Turks their city still dispute.

LXX.

Koutousow, he who afterward beat back
(With some assistance from the frost and snow)
Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
It happen'd was himself beat back just now:
He was a jolly fellow, and could crack
His jest alike in face of friend or foe,
Though life, and death, and victory were at stake;
But here it seem'd his jokes had ceased to take:

LXXI.

For having thrown himself into a ditch,
Follow'd in haste by various grenadiers,
Whose blood the puddle greatly did enrich,
He climb'd to where the parapet appears;
But there his project reach'd its utmost pitch
(Mongst other deaths the General Ribaupierre's
Was much regretted), for the Moslem men
Threw them all down into the ditch again.

LXXII.

And had it not been for some stray troops, landing
They knew not where, being carried by the stream
To some spot, where they lost their understanding,
And wander'd up and down as in a dream,
Until they reach'd, as day-break was expanding,
That which a portal to their eyes did seem,—
The great and gay Koutousow might have lain
Where three parts of his column yet remain.

LXXIII.

And scrambling round the rampart, these same troops,
After the taking of the "Cavalier,"
Just as Koutousow's most "forlorn" of "hopes"
Took, like chameleons, some slight tinge of fear,
Open'd the gate call'd "Kilia" to the groups
Of baffled heroes, who stood shyly near,
Sliding knee-deep in lately frozen mud,
Now thaw'd into a marsh of human blood.

LXXIV.

The Kozacks, or, if so you please, Cossacques—
(I don't much pique myself upon orthography,
So that I do not grossly err in facts,
Statistics, tactics, politics, and geography)—
Having been used to serve on horses' backs,
And no great diletanti in topography
Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
Their chiefs to order,—were all cut to pieces.

LXXV.

Their column, though the Turkish batteries thunder'd
Upon them, ne'ertheless had reach'd the rampart,
And naturally thought they could have plunder'd
The city, without being farther hamper'd;
But as it happens to brave men, they blunder'd—
The Turks at first pretended to have scamper'd,
Only to draw them 'twixt two bastion corners,
From whence they sallied on those Christian scorners.

LXXVI.

Then being taken by the tail—a taking
Fatal to bishops as to soldiers—these
Cossacques were all cut off as day was breaking,
And found their lives were let at a short lease—
But perish'd without shivering or shaking,
Leaving as ladders their heap'd carcasses,
O'er which Lieutenant-Colonel Yesouskoi
March'd with the brave battalion of Polouzki:—

LXXVII.

This valiant man kill'd all the Turks he met,
But could not eat them, being in his turn
Slain by some Mussulmans, who would not yet,
Without resistance, see their city burn.
The walls were won, but 'twas an even bet
Which of the armies would have cause to mourn:
'Twas blow for blow, disputing inch by inch,
For one would not retreat, nor t' other flinch.

LXXVIII.

Another column also suffer'd much:—

And here we may remark with the historian,
You should but give few cartridges to such

Troops as are meant to march with greatest glory on:
When matters must be carried by the touch

Of the bright bayonet, and they all should hurry on,
They sometimes, with a hankering for existence,
Keep merely firing at a foolish distance.

LXXIX.

A junction of the General Meknop's men

(Without the general, who had fallen some time
Before, being badly seconded just then)

Was made at length with those who dared to climb
The death-disgorging rampart once again;

And though the Turk's resistance was sublime,
They took the bastion, which the Seraskier
Defended at a price extremely dear.

LXXX.

Juan and Johnson, and some volunteers

Among the foremost, offer'd him good quarter,
A word which little suits with Seraskiers,

Or at least suited not this valiant Tartar.
He died, deserving well his country's tears,

A savage sort of military martyr.
An English naval officer, who wish'd
To make him prisoner, was also dish'd:

LXXXI.

For all the answer to his proposition
Was from a pistol-shot that laid him dead;
On which the rest, without more intermission,
Began to lay about with steel and lead—
The pious metals most in requisition
On such occasions: not a single head
Was spared;—three thousand Moslems perish'd here,
And sixteen bayonets pierced the Seraskier.

LXXXII.

The city's taken—only part by part—
And Death is drunk with gore: there's not a street
Where fights not to the last some desperate heart
For those for whom it soon shall cease to beat.
Here War forgot his own destructive art
In more destroying Nature; and the heat
Of carnage, like the Nile's sun-sodden slime,
Engender'd monstrous shapes of every crime.

LXXXIII.

A Russian officer, in martial tread
Over a heap of bodies, felt his heel
Seized fast, as if 'twere by the serpent's head
Whose fangs Eve taught her human seed to feel:
In vain he kick'd, and swore, and writhed, and bled,
And howl'd for help as wolves do for a meal—
The teeth still kept their gratifying hold,
As do the subtle snakes described of old,

LXXXIV.

A dying Moslem, who had felt the foot
Of a foe o'er him, snatch'd at it, and bit
The very tendon which is most acute—
(That which some ancient Muse or modern wit
Named after thee, Achilles) and quite through't
He made the teeth meet, nor relinquish'd it
Even with his life—for (but they lie) 'tis said
To the live leg still clung the sever'd head.

LXXXV.

However this may be, 'tis pretty sure
The Russian officer for life was lamed,
For the Turk's teeth stuck faster than a skewer,
And left him 'midst the invalid and maim'd:
The regimental surgeon could not cure
His patient, and perhaps was to be blamed
More than the head of the inveterate foe,
Which was cut off, and scarce even then let go.

LXXXVI.

But then the fact's a fact—and 'tis the part
Of a true poet to escape from fiction
Whene'er he can; for there is little art
In leaving verse more free from the restriction
Of truth than prose, unless to suit the mart
For what is sometimes call'd poetic diction,
And that outrageous appetite for lies
Which Satan angles with for souls, like flies.

LXXXVII.

The city's taken, but not render'd!—No!

There's not a Moslem that hath yielded sword:
The blood may gush out, as the Danube's flow
Rolls by the city wall; but deed nor word
Acknowledge aught of dread of death or foe:

In vain the yell of victory is roar'd
By the advancing Muscovite—the groan
Of the last foe is echoed by his own.

LXXXVIII.

The bayonet pierces and the sabre cleaves,

And human lives are lavish'd every where,
As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves

When the stripp'd forest bows to the bleak air,
And groans; and thus the peopled city grieves,

Shorn of its best and loveliest, and left bare;
But still it falls with vast and awful splinters,
As oaks blown down with all their thousand winters.

LXXXIX.

It is an awful topic—but 'tis not

My cue for any time to be terrific:
For checker'd as is seen our human lot

With good, and bad, and worse, alike prolific
Of melancholy merriment, to quote

Too much of one sort would be soporific;—
Without, or with, offence to friends or foes,
I sketch your world exactly as it goes.

XC.

And one good action in the midst of crimes
Is "quite refreshing," in the affected phrase
Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic times,
With all their pretty milk-and-water ways,
And may serve therefore to bedew these rhymes,
A little scorch'd at present with the blaze
Of conquest and its consequences, which
Make epic poesy so rare and rich.

XCI.

Upon a taken bastion, where there lay
Thousands of slaughter'd men, a yet warm group
Of murder'd women, who had found their way
To this vain refuge, made the good heart droop
And shudder;—while, as beautiful as May,
A female child of ten years tried to stoop
And hide her little palpitating breast
Amidst the bodies lull'd in bloody rest.

XCII.

Two villanous Cossacques pursued the child
With flashing eyes and weapons, match'd with them:
The rudest brute that roams Siberia's wild
Has feelings pure and polish'd as a gem,—
The bear is civilized, the wolf is mild:
And whom for this at last must we condemn?
Their natures? or their sovereigns, who employ
All arts to teach their subjects to destroy?

XCIII.

Their sabres glitter'd o'er her little head,
Whence her fair hair rose twining with affright,
Her hidden face was plunged amidst the dead:
When Juan caught a glimpse of this sad sight,
I shall not say exactly what he *said*,
Because it might not solace "ears polite;"
But what he *did*, was to lay on their backs,
The readiest way of reasoning with Cossacques.

XCIV.

One's hip he slash'd, and split the other's shoulder,
And drove them with their brutal yells to seek
If there might be surgeons who could solder
The wounds they richly merited, and shriek
Their baffled rage and pain; while waxing colder
As he turn'd o'er each pale and gory cheek,
Don Juan raised his little captive from
The heap a moment more had made her tomb.

XCV.

And she was chill as they, and on her face
A slender streak of blood announced how near
Her fate had been to that of all her race;
For the same blow which laid her mother here
Had scarr'd her brow, and left its crimson trace
As the last link with all she had held dear;
But else unhurt, she open'd her large eyes,
And gazed on Juan with a wild surprise,

XCVI.

Just at this instant, while their eyes were fix'd
Upon each other, with dilated glance,
In Juan's look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear, mix'd
With joy to save, and dread of some mischance
Unto his protégée; while hers, transfix'd
With infant terrors, glared as from a trance,
A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face,
Like to a lighted alabaster vase;—

XCVII.

Up came John Johnson (I will not say "*Jack*,"
For that were vulgar, cold, and common-place
On great occasions, such as an attack
On cities, as hath been the present case):
Up Johnson came, with hundreds at his back,
Exclaiming:—"Juan! Juan! On, boy! brace
Your arm, and I'll bet Moscow to a dollar
That you and I will win St. George's collar."⁽³⁾

XCVIII.

"The Seraskier is knock'd upon the head,
But the stone bastion still remains, wherein
The old Pacha sits among some hundreds dead,
Smoking his pipe quite calmly 'midst the din
Of our artillery and his own: 'tis said
Our kill'd, already piled up to the chin,
Lie round the battery; but still it batters,
And grape in volleys, like a vineyard, scatters.

XCIX.

“Then up with me!”—But Juan answer’d, “Look
Upon this child—I saved her—must not leave
Her life to chance; but point me out some nook
Of safety, where she less may shrink and grieve,
And I am with you.”—Whereon Johnson took [sleeve
A glance around—and shrugg’d—and twitch’d his
And black silk neckcloth—and replied, “You’re right;
Poor thing! what’s to be done? I’m puzzled quite.”

C.

Said Juan—“Whatsoever is to be
Done, I’ll not quit her till she seems secure
Of present life a good deal more than we.”—
Quoth Johnson—“*Neither* will I quite ensure;
But at the least *you* may die gloriously.”—
Juan replied—“At least I will endure
Whate’er is to be borne—but not resign
This child, who is parentless, and therefore mine.”

CI.

Johnson said—“Juan, we’ve no time to lose;
The child’s a pretty child—a very pretty—
I never saw such eyes—but hark! now choose
Between your fame and feelings, pride and pity;—
Hark! how the roar increases!—no excuse
Will serve when there is plunder in a city;—
I should be loath to march without you, but,
By God! we’ll be too late for the first cut.”

CII.

But Juan was immoveable; until

Johnson, who really loved him in his way,
Pick'd out amongst his followers with some skill

Such as he thought the least given up to prey;
And swearing if the infant came to ill

That they should all be shot on the next day;
But if she were deliver'd safe and sound,
They should at least have fifty rubles round,

CIII.

And all allowances besides of plunder

In fair proportion with their comrades;—then
Juan consented to march on through thunder,

Which thinn'd at every step their ranks of men:
And yet the rest rush'd eagerly—no wonder,

For they were heated by the hope of gain,
A thing which happens every where each day—
No hero trusteth wholly to half-pay.

CIV.

And such is victory, and such is man!

At least nine-tenths of what we call so;—God
May have another name for half we scan

As human beings, or his ways are odd.

But to our subject: a brave Tartar khan—

Or “sultan,” as the author (to whose nod
In prose I bend my humble verse) doth call
This chieftain—somehow would not yield at all:

CV.

But flank'd by *five* brave sons (such is polygamy,
That she spawns warriors by the score, where none
Are prosecuted for that false crime bigamy),
He never would believe the city won
While courage clung but to a single twig.—Am I
Describing Priam's, Peleus', or Jove's son?
Neither—but a good, plain, old, temperate man,
Who fought with his five children in the van.

CVI.

To *take* him was the point. The truly brave,
When they behold the brave oppress'd with odds,
Are touch'd with a desire to shield and save;—
A mixture of wild beasts and demi-gods
Are they—now furious as the sweeping wave,
Now moved with pity: even as sometimes nods
The rugged tree unto the summer wind,
Compassion breathes along the savage mind.

CVII.

But he would *not* be *taken*, and replied
To all the propositions of surrender
By mowing Christians down on every side,
As obstinate as Swedish Charles at Bender.
His five brave boys no less the foe defied;
Whereon the Russian pathos grew less tender,
As being a virtue, like terrestrial patience,
Apt to wear out on trifling provocations.

CVIII.

And spite of Johnson and of Juan, who
Expended all their eastern phraseology
In begging him, for God's sake, just to show
So much less fight as might form an apology
For *them* in saving such a desperate foe—
He hew'd away, like doctors of theology
When they dispute with sceptics; and with curses
Struck at his friends, as babies beat their nurses.

CIX.

Nay, he had wounded, though but slightly, both
Juan and Johnson; whereupon they fell,
The first with sighs, the second with an oath,
Upon his angry sultanship, pell-mell,
And all around were grown exceeding wroth
At such a pertinacious infidel,
And pour'd upon him and his sons like rain,
Which they resisted like a sandy plain

CX.

That drinks and still is dry. At last they perish'd—
His second son was levell'd by a shot;
His third was sabred; and the fourth, most cherish'd
Of all the five, on bayonets met his lot;
The fifth, who, by a Christian mother nourish'd,
Had been neglected, ill-used, and what not,
Because deform'd, yet died all game and bottom,
To save a sire who blush'd that he begot him.

CXL.

The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
As great a scorner of the Nazarene
As ever Mahomet pick'd out for a martyr,
Who only saw the black-eyed girls in green,
Who make the beds of those who won't take quarter
On earth, in Paradise; and when once seen,
Those houris, like all other pretty creatures,
Do just whate'er they please, by dint of features.

CXIL.

And what they pleased to do with the young khan
In heaven I know not, nor pretend to guess;
But doubtless they prefer a fine young man
To tough old heroes, and can do no less;
And that's the cause no doubt why, if we scan
A field of battle's ghastly wilderness,
For one rough, weather-beaten, veteran body,
You'll find ten thousand handsome coxcombs bloody.

CXIII.

Your houris also have a natural pleasure
In lopping off your lately married men,
Before the bridal hours have danced their measure,
And the sad, second moon grows dim again,
Or dull repentance hath had dreary leisure
To wish him back a bachelor now and then.
And thus your houri (it may be) disputes
Of these brief blossoms the immediate fruits.

CXIV.

Thus the young khan, with houris in his sight,
Thought not upon the charms of four young brides,
But bravely rush'd on his first heavenly night.

In short, howe'er *our* better faith derides,
These black-eyed virgins make the Moslems fight,
As though there were one heaven and none besides—
Whereas, if all be true we hear of heaven
And hell, there must at least be six or seven.

CXV.

So fully flash'd the phantom on his eyes,
That when the very lance was in his heart,
He shouted "Allah!" and saw Paradise
With all its veil of mystery drawn apart,
And bright eternity without disguise

On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise, dart:—
With prophets, houris, angels, saints, descried
In one voluptuous blaze,—and then he died:

CXVI.

But with a heavenly rapture on his face,
The good old khan, who long had ceased to see
Houris, or aught except his florid race

Who grew like cedars round him gloriously—
When he beheld his latest hero grace

The earth, which he became like a fell'd tree,
Paused for a moment from the fight, and cast
A glance on that slain son, his first and last.

CXVII.

The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
Stopp'd as if once more willing to concede
Quarter, in case he bade them not "aroynt!"
As he before had done. He did not heed
Their pause nor signs: his heart was out of joint,
And shook (till now unshaken) like a reed,
As he look'd down upon his children gone,
And felt—though done with life—he was alone.

CXVIII.

But 'twas a transient tremor:—with a spring
Upon the Russian steel his breast he flung,
As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
Against the light wherein she dies: he clung
Closer, that all the deadlier they might wring,
Unto the bayonets which had pierced his young;
And throwing back a dim look on his sons,
In one wide wound pour'd forth his soul at once.

CXIX.

'Tis strange enough—the rough, tough soldiers, who
Spared neither sex nor age in their career
Of carnage, when this old man was pierced through,
And lay before them with his children near,
Touch'd by the heroism of him they slew,
Were melted for a moment; though no tear,
Flow'd from their bloodshot eyes, all red with strife,
They honour'd such determined scorn of life.

CXX.

But the stone bastion still kept up its fire,
Where the chief pacha calmly held his post:
Some twenty times he made the Russ retire,
And baffled the assaults of all their host;
At length he condescended to inquire
If yet the city's rest were won or lost;
And being told the latter, sent a bey
To answer Ribas' summons to give way.

CXXI.

In the mean time, cross-legg'd, with great sang froid,
Among the scorching ruins he sat smoking
Tobacco on a little carpet;—Troy
Saw nothing like the scene around;—yet looking
With martial stoicism, nought seem'd to annoy
His stern philosophy; but gently stroking
His beard, he puff'd his pipe's ambrosial gales,
As if he had three lives, as well as tails.

CXXII.

The town was taken—whether he might yield
Himself or bastion, little matter'd now:
His stubborn valour was no future shield.
Ismail's no more! The crescent's silver bow
Sunk, and the crimson cross glared o'er the field,
But red with no *redeeming* gore: the glow
Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
Was imaged back in blood, the sea of slaughter.

CXXIII.

All that the mind would shrink from of excesses;
All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man's distresses;
All that the devil would do if run stark mad;
All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
All by which hell is peopled, or as sad
As hell—mere mortals who their power abuse—
Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

CXXIV.

If here and there some transient trait of pity
Was shown, and some more noble heart broke through
Its bloody bond, and saved perhaps some pretty
Child, or an aged, helpless man or two—
What's this in one annihilated city,
Where thousand loves, and ties, and duties grow?
Cockneys of London! Muscadins of Paris!
Just ponder what a pious pastime war is.

CXXV.

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
Are purchased by all agonies and crimes:
Or if these do not move you, don't forget
Such doom may be your own in after times.
Meantime the taxes, Castlereagh, and debt,
Are hints as good as sermons, or as rhymes.
Read your own hearts and Ireland's present story,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's glory.

CXXVI.

But still there is unto a patriot nation,
Which loves so well its country and its king,
A subject of sublimest exultation—
Bear it, ye Muses, on your brightest wing!
Howe'er the mighty locust, Desolation,
Strip your green fields, and to your harvests cling,
Gaunt famine never shall approach the throne—
Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty
stone.

CXXVII.

But let me put an end unto my theme:
There was an end of Ismail—hapless town!
Far flash'd her burning towers o'er Danube's stream,
And redly ran his blushing waters down.
The horrid war-whoop and the shriller scream
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders grown:
Of forty thousand who had mann'd the wall,
Some hundreds breathed—the rest were silent all!

CXXVIII.

In one thing ne'ertheless 'tis fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration:
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase—
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long station
In winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste;—they ravish'd very little.

CXXIX.

Much did they slay, more plunder, and no less
Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line;—but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

CXXX.

Some odd mistakes too happen'd in the dark,
Which show'd a want of lanterns, or of taste—
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could mark
Their friends from foes,—besides such things from
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark [haste
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflower'd by different grenadiers.

CXXXI.

But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there ensued
To those who had felt the inconvenient state
Of “single blessedness,” and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

CXXXII.

Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long caged)
“Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!”
But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
There was small leisure for superfluous sin;
But whether they escaped or no, lies hid
In darkness—I can only hope they did.

CXXXIII.

Suwarrow now was conqueror—a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like thatch
Blazed, and the cannon’s roar was scarce allay’d,
With bloody hands he wrote his first despatch;
And here exactly follows what he said:—
“Glory to *God* and to the empress!” (*Powers
Eternal! such names mingled!*) “Ismail’s ours.”⁽⁹⁾

CXXXIV.

Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
Since “Menè, Menè, Tekel,” and “Upharsin,”
Which hands or pens have ever traced of swords.
Heaven help me! I’m but little of a parson:
What Daniel read was short-hand of the Lord’s,
Severe, sublime; the prophet wrote no farce on
The fate of nations;—but this Russ so witty
Could rhyme, like Nero, o’er a burning city.

CXXXV.

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
Duly accompanied by shrieks and groans,
Which few will sing, I trust, but none forget it—
For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against earth's tyrants. Never let it
Be said that we still truckle unto thrones;—
But ye—our children's children! think how we
Show'd *what things were* before the world was free!

CXXXVI.

That hour is not for us, but 'tis for you:
And as, in the great joy of your millennium,
You hardly will believe such things were true
As now occur, I thought that I would pen you 'em;
But may their very memory perish too!—
Yet if perchance remember'd, still disdain you 'em
More than you scorn the savages of yore,
Who *painted* their *bare* limbs, but *not* with gore.

CXXXVII.

And when you hear historians talk of thrones,
And those that sate upon them, let it be
As we now gaze upon the mammoth's bones,
And wonder what old world such things could see,
Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
The pleasant riddles of futurity—
Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
As the real purpose of a pyramid.

CXXXVIII.

Reader! I have kept my word,—at least so far
As the first Canto promised. You have now
Had sketches of love, tempest, travel, war—
All very accurate, you must allow,
And *epic*, if plain truth should prove no bar;
For I have drawn much less with a long bow
Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
But Phœbus lends me now and then a string,

CXXXIX.

With which I still can harp, and carp, and fiddle.
What farther hath befallen or may befall
The hero of this grand poetic riddle,
I by and by may tell you, if at all:
But now I choose to break off in the middle,
Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn wall,
While Juan is sent off with the despatch,
For which all Petersburg is on the watch.

CXL.

This special honour was conferr'd, because
He had behaved with courage and humanity—
Which *last*, men like, when they have time to pause
From their ferocities produced by vanity.
His little captive gain'd him some applause
For saving her amidst the wild insanity
Of carnage,—and I think he was more glad in her
Safety, than his new order of St. Vladimir.

CXLI.

The Moslem orphan went with her protector,
For she was homeless, houseless, helpless; all
Her friends, like the sad family of Hector,
Had perish'd in the field or by the wall:
Her very place of birth was but a spectre
Of what it had been; there the Muezzin's call
To prayer was heard no more!—and Juan wept,
And made a vow to shield her, which he kept.

NOTES TO CANTO VIII.

Note 1, page 33, stanza viii.

“Allah! Allah! Hu!”

Allah Hu! is properly the war cry of the Mussulmans, and they dwell long on the last syllable, which gives it a very wild and peculiar effect.

Note 2, page 34, stanza ix.

“Carnage” (*so Wordsworth tells you*) “is God’s daughter.”

“But *thy** most dreaded instrument
In working out a pure intent,
Is man array’d for mutual slaughter;
Yea, *Carnage* is *thy* daughter!”

WORDSWORTH’S Thanksgiving Ode.

Note 3, page 37, stanza xviii.

Was printed Grove, although his name was Grose.

A fact: see the Waterloo Gazettes. I recollect remarking at the time to a friend:—“*There is fame! a man is killed, his name is Grose, and they print it Grove.*” I was at college with the deceased, who was a very amiable and clever man, and his society in great request for his wit, gaiety, and “*Chansons à boire.*”

Note 4, page 38, stanza xxiii.

The antiquarians, who can settle time, &c.

See Major Vallencey and Sir Lawrence Parsons.

* To wit, the Deity’s: this is perhaps as pretty a pedigree for murder as ever was found out by Garter King at Arms.—What would have been said, had any free-spoken people discovered such a lineage?

Note 5, page 39, stanza xxv.

'Tis pity "that such meaning should pave hell."

The Portuguese proverb says that "hell is paved with good intentions."

Note 6, page 42, stanza xxxiii.

By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon!

Gunpowder is said to have been discovered by this friar.

Note 7, page 46, stanza xlvi.

*. . . . they could kick down the palisades,
Which scarcely rose much higher than grass blades.*

They were but two feet high above the level.

Note 8, page 63, stanza xcvi.

That you and I will win St. George's collar.

The Russian military order.

Note 9, page 75, stanza cxxxiii.

*Glory to God and to the empress!" (Powers
Eternal! such names mingled!) "Ismail's ours."*

In the original Russian—

*"Slava bogu! slava vam!
Krepost Vzala, y ŭä tam."*

A kind of couplet; for he was a poet.

DON JUAN.

CANTO IX.

I.

OH, Wellington! (or “Vilainton”—for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punn’d it down to this facetious phrase—
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same)
You have obtain’d great pensions and much praise:
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder “Nay!”⁽¹⁾

II.

I don’t think that you used K—n—rd quite well
In Marinèt’s affair—in fact ’twas shabby,
And like some other things won’t do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster’s old abbey.
Upon the rest ’tis not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast to zero,
In fact your grace is still but a *young hero*.

III.

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
You have repair'd Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore*;
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).

IV.

You are "the best of cut-throats:"—do not start;
The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:—
War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.
If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters, will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by Waterloo?

V.

I am no flatterer—you've supp'd full of flattery:
They say you like it too—'tis no great wonder:
He whose whole life has been assault and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he
May like being praised for every lucky blunder,
Call'd "Saviour of the Nations"—not yet saved,
And "Europe's Liberator"—still enslaved.

VI.

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate

Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate⁽²⁾

A slice or two from your luxurious meals:
He fought, but has not fed so well of late.

Some hunger too they say the people feels:—
There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,
But pray give back a little to the nation.

VII.

I don't mean to reflect—a man so great as

You, my lord duke! is far above reflection:
The high Roman fashion too of Cincinnatus,
With modern history has but small connexion:
Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,

You need not take them under your direction;
And half a million for your Sabine farm
Is rather dear!—I'm sure I mean no harm.

VIII.

Great men have always scorn'd great recompenses:

Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,
Not leaving even his funeral expenses:

George Washington had thanks and nought beside,
Except the all-cloudless glory (which few men's is)

To free his country: Pitt too had his pride,
And as a high-soul'd minister of state is
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

IX.

Never had mortal man such opportunity,
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
You might have freed fallen Europe from the unity
Of tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore: [ye?
And *now*—What *is* your fame? Shall the Muse tune it
Now—that the rabble's first vain shouts are o'er?
Go! hear it in your famish'd country's cries!
Behold the world! and curse your victories!

X.

As these new cantos touch on warlike feats,
To *you* the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe
Truths, that you will not read in the Gazettes,
But which 'tis time to teach the hireling tribe
Who fatten on their country's gore, and debts,
Must be recited, and—without a bribe.
You *did* great things; but not being *great* in mind,
Have left *undone* the *greatest*—and mankind.

XI.

Death laughs—Go ponder o'er the skeleton
With which men image out the unknown thing
That hides the past world, like to a set sun
Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter spring—
Death laughs at all you weep for:—look upon
This hourly dread of all! whose *threaten'd* sting
Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath:
Mark! how its lipless mouth grins without breath!

XII.

Mark! how it laughs and scorns at all you are!

And yet *was* what you are: from *ear* to *ear*

It *laughs not*—there is now no fleshy bar

So call'd; the Antic long hath ceased to *hear*,
But still he *smiles*; and whether near or far

He strips from man that mantle (far more dear
Than even the tailor's) his incarnate skin,
White, black, or copper—the dead bones will grin.

XIII.

And thus Death laughs,—it is sad merriment,

But still it *is* so; and with such example

Why should not Life be equally content

With his superior, in a smile to trample
Upon the nothings which are daily spent

Like bubbles on an ocean much less ample
Than the eternal deluge, which devours
Suns as rays—worlds like atoms—years like hours.

XIV.

“To be, or not to be? that is the question,”

Says Shakspeare, who just now is much in fashion.

I am neither Alexander nor Hephæstion,

Nor ever had for *abstract* fame much passion;
But would much rather have a sound digestion

Than Buonaparte's cancer:—could I dash on
Through fifty victories to shame or fame,
Without a stomach—what were a good name?

XV.

“Oh dura ilia messorum!” “Oh

Ye rigid guts of reapers!” I translate
For the great benefit of those who know
What indigestion is—that inward fate
Which makes all Styx through one small liver flow.

A peasant’s sweat is worth his lord’s estate:
Let *this* one toil for bread—*that* rack for rent,
He who sleeps best may be the most content.

XVI.

“To be, or not to be?”—Ere I decide,

I should be glad to know that which *is being?*
’Tis true we speculate both far and wide,
And deem, because we *see*, we are *all-seeing*:
For my part, I’ll enlist on neither side,
Until I see both sides for once agreeing.
For me, I sometimes think that life is death,
Rather than life a mere affair of breath.

XVII.

“Que sçais-je?” was the motto of Montaigne,
As also of the first academicians;
That all is dubious which man may attain,
Was one of their most favourite positions.
There’s no such thing as certainty, that’s plain
As any of Mortality’s conditions;
So little do we know what we’re about in
This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

XVIII.

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation;
But what if carrying sail capsize the boat?
Your wise men don't know much of navigation;
And swimming long in the abyss of thought
Is apt to tire: a calm and shallow station
Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and gathers
Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

XIX.

"But heaven," as Cassio says, "is above all—
No more of this then, let us pray!" We have
Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,
Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,
Besides fish, beasts, and birds. "The sparrow's fall
Is special providence," though how it gave
Offence, we know not; probably it perch'd
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly search'd.

XX.

Oh! ye immortal Gods! what is theogony?
Oh! thou too mortal man! what is philanthropy?
Oh! world, which was and is, what is cosmogony?
Some people have accused me of misanthropy;
And yet I know no more than the mahogany
That forms this desk, of what they mean; *lykanthropy*
I comprehend, for without transformation
Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

XXI.

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,
Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have ne'er
Done any thing exceedingly unkind,—
And (though I could not now and then forbear
Following the bent of body or of mind)
Have always had a tendency to spare,—
Why do they call me misanthrope? Because
They hate me, not I them:—and here we'll pause.

XXII.

'Tis time we should proceed with our good poem,—
For I maintain that it is really good,
Not only in the body, but the proem,
However little both are understood
Just now,—but by and by the Truth will show 'em
Herself in her sublimest attitude:
And till she doth, I fain must be content
To share her beauty and her banishment.

XXIII.

Our hero (and, I trust, kind reader! yours—)
Was left upon his way to the chief city
Of the immortal Peter's polish'd boors, [witty.
Who still have shown themselves more brave than
I know its mighty empire now allures
Much flattery—even Voltaire's, and that's a pity.
For me, I deem an absolute autocrat
Not a barbarian, but much worse than that.

XXIV.

And I will war, at least in words (and—should
My chance so happen—deeds) with all who war
With Thought;—and of Thought's foes by far most
Tyrants and sycophants have been and are. [rude,
I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every despotism in every nation.

XXV.

It is not that I adulate the people:
Without *me*, there are demagogues enough,
And infidels, to pull down every steeple,
And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow scepticism to reap hell,
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know;—I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings—from you as me.

XXVI.

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties:—never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
Who neither wishes to be bound or bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackall cry.

XXVII.

That's an appropriate simile, that jackall;—

I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,

Power's base purveyors, who for pickings prowl,
And scent the prey their masters would attack all.

However, the poor jackalls are less foul
(As being the brave lions' keen providers)
Than human insects, catering for spiders.

XXVIII.

Raise but an arm! 't will brush their web away,
And without *that*, their poison and their claws

Are useless. Mind, good people! what I say—
(Or rather peoples)—*go on* without pause!

The web of these tarantulas each day

Increases, till you shall make common cause:
None, save the Spanish fly and Attic bee,
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

XXIX.

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,
Was left upon his way with the despatch,
Where blood was talk'd of as we would of water;
And carcasses that lay as thick as thatch

O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter

Fair Catherine's pastime—who look'd on the match
Between these nations as a main of cocks,
Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

XXX.

And there in a *kibitka* he roll'd on

(A cursed sort of carriage without springs,
Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a whole bone),

Pondering on glory, chivalry, and kings,
And orders, and on all that he had done—

And wishing that post-horses had the wings
Of Pegasus, or at the least post-chaises
Had feathers, when a traveller on deep ways is.

XXXI.

At every jolt—and they were many—still

He turn'd his eyes upon his little charge,
As if he wish'd that she should fare less ill

Than he, in these sad highways left at large
To ruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,

Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge
On *her* canals, where God takes sea and land,
Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

XXXII.

At least he pays no rent, and has best right

To be the first of what we used to call
“Gentlemen farmers”—a race worn out quite,

Since lately there have been no rents at all,
And “gentlemen” are in a piteous plight,

And “farmers” can't raise Ceres from her fall:
She fell with Buonaparte—What strange thoughts
Arise, when we see emperors fall with oats!

XXXIII.

But Juan turn'd his eyes on the sweet child

Whom he had saved from slaughter—what a trophy!
Oh! ye who build up monuments, defiled

With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive sophy,
Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,

And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee
To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the sinner!
Because he could no more digest his dinner;—⁽³⁾

XXXIV.

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,

That *one* life saved, especially if young
Or pretty, is a thing to recollect

Far sweeter than the greenest laurels sprung
From the manure of human clay, though deck'd

With all the praises ever said or sung:
Though hymn'd by every harp, unless within
Your heart joins chorus, Fame is but a din.

XXXV.

Oh! ye great authors luminous, voluminous!

Ye twice ten hundred thousand daily scribes!
Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers, illumine us!

Whether you're paid by government in bribes,
To prove the public debt is not consuming us—

Or, roughly treading on the "courtier's kibes"
With clownish heel, your popular circulation
Feeds you by printing half the realm's starvation;—

XXXVI.

Oh, ye great authors!—"Apropos des bottes,"

I have forgotten what I meant to say,

As sometimes have been greater sages' lots;—

'Twas something calculated to allay

All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots:

Certes it would have been but thrown away,

And that's one comfort for my lost advice,

Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

XXXVII.

But let it go:—it will one day be found

With other relics of "a former world,"

When this world shall be *former*, underground,

Thrown topsy-turvy; twisted, crisp'd, and curl'd,

Baked, fried, or burnt, turn'd inside-out, or drown'd,

Like all the worlds before, which have been hurl'd

First out of, and then back again to chaos,

The superstratum which will overlay us.

XXXVIII.

So Cuvier says;—and then shall come again

Unto the new creation, rising out

From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain

Of things destroy'd and left in airy doubt:

Like to the notions we now entertain

Of Titans, giants, fellows of about

Some hundred feet in height, *not* to say *miles*,

And mammoths, and your winged crocodiles.

XXXIX.

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!

How the new worldlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup!

(For they themselves will be but of the least:
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material—
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)

XL.

How will—to these young people, just thrust out
From some fresh Paradise, and set to plough,
And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves about,
And plant, and reap, and spin, and grind, and sow,
Till all the arts at length are brought about,
Especially of war and taxing,—how,
I say, will these great relics, when they see 'em,
Look like the monsters of a new museum?

XLI.

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:

“The time is out of joint;”—and so am I;
I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,
And deviate into matters rather dry.
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call
Much too poetical: men should know why
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,
I never know the word which will come next.

XLII.

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
Now pondering:—it is time we should narrate.
I left Don Juan with his horses baiting—

Now we'll get o'er the ground at a great rate.
I shall not be particular in stating

His journey, we've so many tours of late:
Suppose him then at Petersburg; suppose
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

XLIII.

Suppose him in a handsome uniform;
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a storm,
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,
Of yellow casimire we may presume,
White stockings drawn uncurdled as new milk
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

XLIV.

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in hand,
Made up by youth, fame, and an army tailor—
That great enchanter, at whose rod's command
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self turns paler,
Seeing how Art can make her work more grand
(When she don't pin men's limbs in like a jailor),—
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artillery!

XLV.

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravāt;

His wings subdued to epaulettes; his quiver
Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at

His side as a small sword, but sharp as ever;
His bow converted into a cock'd hat;

But still so like, that Psyche were more clever
Than some wives (who make blunders no less stupid),
If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

XLVI.

The courtiers stared, the ladies whisper'd, and

The empress smiled: the reigning favourite frown'd—
I quite forget which of them was in hand

Just then; as they are rather numerous found,
Who took by turns that difficult command

Since first her majesty was singly crown'd:
But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

XLVII.

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,

Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'ertheless
There was a something in his turn of limb,

And still more in his eye, which seem'd to express,
That though he look'd one of the seraphim,

There lurk'd a man beneath the spirit's dress.
Besides, the empress sometimes liked a boy,
And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoi. (4)

XLVIII.

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,
Or Scherbatoff, or any other *off*
Or *on*, might dread her majesty had not room enough
Within her bosom (which was not too tough)
For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom enough
Along the aspect, whether smooth or rough,
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that "high official situation."

XLIX.

O, gentle ladies! should you seek to know
The import of this diplomatic phrase,
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess⁽⁵⁾ show
His parts of speech; and in the strange displays
Of that odd string of words, all in a row,
Which none divine, and every one obeys,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no* meaning,
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleanings.

L.

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey—
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a doubt,
Did not his deeds unriddle them each day—
That monstrous hieroglyphic—that long spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh!
And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

LI.

An English lady ask'd of an Italian,
What were the actual and official duties
Of the strange thing, some women set a value on,
Which hovers oft about some married beauties,
Called "Cavalier servente?" a Pygmalion
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas! too true 'tis)
Beneath his art. The dame, press'd to disclose them,
Said—"Lady, I beseech you to *suppose them*."

LII.

And thus I supplicate your supposition,
And mildest, matron-like interpretation,
Of the imperial favourite's condition.
'Twas a high place, the highest in the nation
In fact, if not in rank; and the suspicion
Of any one's attaining to his station,
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair of shoulders,
If rather broad, made stocks rise and their holders.

LIII.

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous boy,
And had retain'd his boyish look beyond
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,
With beards and whiskers, and the like, the fond
Parisian aspect which upset old Troy
And founded Doctors' Commons:—I have conn'd
The history of divorces, which, though chequer'd,
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

LIV.

And Catherine, who loved all things (save her lord,
Who was gone to his place) and pass'd for much,
Admiring those (by dainty dames abhorr'd)
Gigantic gentlemen, yet had a touch
Of sentiment; and he she most adored
Was the lamented Lanskoi, who was such
A lover as had cost her many a tear,
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

LV.

Oh thou "teterrima causa" of all "belli"—
Thou gate of life and death—thou nondescript!
Whence is our exit and our entrance,—well I
May pause in pondering how all souls are dipt
In thy perennial fountain:—how man *fell*, I
Know not, since knowledge saw her branches stript
Of her first fruit; but how he falls and rises
Since, thou hast settled beyond all surmises.

LVI.

Some call thee "the worst cause of war," but I
Maintain thou art the *best*: for after all
From thee we come, to thee we go, and why
To get at thee not batter down a wall,
Or waste a world? since no one can deny
Thou dost replenish worlds both great and small:
With, or without thee, all things at a stand
Are, or would be, thou sea of life's dry land!

LVII.

Catherine, who was the grand epitome

Of that great cause of war, or peace, or what
You please (it causes all the things which be,

So you may take your choice of this or that)—
Catherine, I say, was very glad to see

The handsome herald, on whose plumage sat
Victory; and, pausing as she saw him kneel
With his despatch, forgot to break the seal.

LVIII.

Then recollecting the whole empress, nor

Forgetting quite the woman (which composed
At least three parts of this great whole), she tore

The letter open with an air which posed
The court, that watch'd each look her visage wore,

Until a royal smile at length disclosed
Fair weather for the day. Though rather spacious,
Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth gracious.

LIX.

Great joy was hers, or rather joys: the first

Was a ta'en city, thirty thousand slain.

Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,

As an East Indian sunrise on the main.

These quench'd a moment her ambition's thirst—

So Arab deserts drink in summer's rain:

In vain!—As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands!

LX.

Her next amusement was more fanciful;

She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes, who threw
Into a Russian couplet rather dull

The whole gazette of thousands whom he slew.

Her third was feminine enough to annul

The shudder which runs naturally through
Our veins, when things call'd sovereigns think it best
To kill, and generals turn it into jest.

LXI.

The two first feelings ran their course complete,

And lighted first her eye, and then her mouth:

The whole court look'd immediately most sweet,

Like flowers well water'd after a long drouth:—

But when on the lieutenant at her feet

Her majesty, who liked to gaze on youth

Almost as much as on a new despatch,

Glanced mildly, all the world was on the watch.

LXII.

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,

When *wroth*; while *pleased*, she was as fine a figure
As those who like things rosy, ripe, and succulent,

Would wish to look on, while they are in vigour.
She could repay each amatory look you lent

With interest, and in turn was wont with rigour
To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount

At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

LXIII.

With her the latter, though at times convenient,
Was not so necessary; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce *look'd* lenient,
And always used her favourites too well.
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,
Your "fortune" was in a fair way "to swell
A man" (as Giles says) ⁽⁶⁾; for though she would widow all
Nations, she liked man as an individual.

LXIV.

What a strange thing is man! and what a stranger
Is woman! What a whirlwind is her head,
And what a whirlpool full of depth and danger
Is all the rest about her! Whether wed,
Or widow, maid or mother, she can change her
Mind like the wind: whatever she has said
Or done, is light to what she'll say or do;—
The oldest thing on record, and yet new!

LXV.

Oh Catherine! (for of all interjections,
To thee both *oh!* and *ah!* belong of right
In love and war) how odd are the connexions
Of human thoughts, which jostle in their flight!
Just now *yours* were cut out in different sections:
First Ismail's capture caught your fancy quite;
Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious batch;
And *thirdly* he who brought you the despatch!

LXVI.

Shakspeare talks of "the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;"
And some such visions cross'd her majesty,
While her young herald knelt before her still.
'Tis very true the hill seem'd rather high,
For a lieutenant to climb up; but skill [blessing
Smooth'd even the Simplon's steep, and by God's
With youth and health all kisses are "heaven-kissing."

LXVII.

Her majesty look'd down, the youth look'd up—
And so they fell in love;—She with his face,
His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup
With the first draught intoxicates apace,
A quintessential laudanum or "black drop,"
Which makes one drunk at once, without the base
Expedient of full bumpers; for the eye
In love drinks all life's fountains (save tears) dry.

LXVIII.

He, on the other hand, if not in love,
Fell into that no less imperious passion,
Self-love—which, when some sort of thing above
Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in fashion,
Or duchess, princess, empress, "deigns to prove"
('Tis Pope's phrase) a great longing, though a rash one,
For one especial person out of many,
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

LXIX.

Besides, he was of that delighted age
Which makes all female ages equal—when
We don't much care with whom we may engage,
As bold as Daniel in the lion's den,
So that we can our native sun assuage
In the next ocean, which may flow just then,
To make a twilight in, just as Sol's heat is
Quench'd in the lap of the salt sea, or Thetis.

LXX.

And Catherine (we must say thus much for Catherine),
Though bold and bloody, was the kind of thing
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,
Because each lover look'd a sort of king,
Made up upon an amatory pattern,
A royal husband in all save the *ring*—
Which, being the damn'dest part of matrimony,
Seem'd taking out the sting to leave the honey.

LXXI.

And when you add to this, her womanhood
In its meridian, her blue eyes, or gray—
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,
Or better, as the best examples say:
Napoleon's, Mary's (queen of Scotland) should
Lend to that colour a transcendent ray;
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,
Too wise to look through optics black or blue)—

LXXII.

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,
Her plumpness, her imperial condescension,
Her preference of a boy to men much bigger
(Fellows whom Messalina's self would pension),
Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour,
With other *extras*, which we need not mention,—
All these, or any one of these, explain
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

LXXIII.

And that's enough, for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Except where 'tis a mere insanity,
A maddening spirit which would strive to blend
Itself with beauty's frail inanity,
On which the passion's self seems to depend:
And hence some heathenish philosophers
Make love the main spring of the universe.

LXXIV.

Besides Platonic love, besides the love
Of God, the love of sentiment, the loving
Of faithful pairs—(I needs must rhyme with dove,
That good old steam-boat which keeps verses moving
'Gainst reason—Reason ne'er was hand-and-glove
With rhyme, but always leant less to improving
The sound than sense)—besides all these pretences
To love, there are those things which words name
senses;

LXXV.

Those movements, those improvements in our bodies,
Which make all bodies anxious to get out
Of their own sand-pits, to mix with a goddess,
For such all women are at first no doubt.
How beautiful that moment! and how odd is
That fever which precedes the languid rout
Of our sensations! What a curious way
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!

LXXVI.

The noblest kind of love is love Platonical,
To end or to begin with; the next grand
Is that which may be christen'd love canonical,
Because the clergy take the thing in hand;
The third sort to be noted in our chronicle
As flourishing in every Christian land,
Is, when chaste matrons to their other ties
Add what may be call'd *marriage in disguise*.

LXXVII.

Well, we won't analyze—our story must
Tell for itself: the sovereign was smitten,
Juan much flatter'd by her love, or lust;—
I cannot stop to alter words once written,
And the two are so mix'd with human dust,
That he who *names one*, both perchance may hit on;
But in such matters Russia's mighty empress
Behaved no better than a common sempstress.

LXXVIII.

The whole court melted into one wide whisper,
And all lips were applied unto all ears!
The elder ladies' wrinkles curl'd much crisper
As they beheld; the younger cast some leers
On one another, and each lovely lisper
Smiled as she talk'd the matter o'er; but tears
Of rivalry rose in each clouded eye
Of all the standing army who stood by.

LXXIX.

All the ambassadors of all the powers
Inquired, Who was this very new young man,
Who promised to be great in some few hours?
Which is full soon (though life is but a span.)
Already they beheld the silver showers
Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,
Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
Of several ribands, and some thousand peasants.

LXXX.

Catherine was generous,—all such ladies are:
Love, that great opener of the heart and all
The ways that lead there, be they near or far,
Above, below, by turnpikes great or small,—
Love—(though she had a cursed taste for war,
And was not the best wife, unless we call
Such Clytemnestra, though perhaps 'tis better
That one should die, than two drag on the fetter)—

LXXXI.

Love had made Catherine make each lover's fortune,
Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,
Whose avarice all disbursements did importune,
If history, the grand liar, ever saith
The truth; and though grief her old age might shorten,
Because she put a favourite to death,
Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
And stinginess, disgrace her sex and station.

LXXXII.

But when the levee rose, and all was bustle
In the dissolving circle, all the nations'
Ambassadors began as 't were to hustle
Round the young man with their congratulations.
Also the softer silks were heard to rustle
Of gentle dames, among whose recreations
It is to speculate on handsome faces,
Especially when such lead to high places.

LXXXIII.

Juan, who found himself, he knew not how,
A general object of attention, made
His answers with a very graceful bow,
As if born for the ministerial trade.
Though modest, on his unembarrass'd brow
Nature had written "gentleman." He said
Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
Flung hovering graces o'er him like a banner.

LXXXIV.

An order from her majesty consign'd

Our young lieutenant to the genial care
Of those in office: all the world look'd kind

(As it will look sometimes with the first stare,
Which youth would not act ill to keep in mind),

As also did Miss Protasoff then there,
Named from her mystic office "l'Eprouyeuse,"
A term inexplicable to the Muse.

LXXXV.

With *her* then, as in humble duty bound,

Juan retired,—and so will I, until
My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.

We have just lit on a "heaven-kissing hill,"
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,

And all my fancies whirling like a mill;
Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,
To take a quiet ride in some green lane.

NOTES TO CANTO IX.

Note 1, page 81, stanza i.

Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"

Query—*Ney*? Printer's devil.

Note 2, page 83, stanza vi.

And send the sentinel before your gate.

"I at this time got a post, being for fatigue, with four others. We were sent to break biscuit, and make a mess for Lord Wellington's hounds. I was very hungry, and thought it a good job at the time, as we got our own fill while we broke the biscuit,—a thing I had not got for some days. When thus engaged, the Prodigal Son was never once out of my mind; and I sighed, as I fed the dogs, over my humble situation and my ruined hopes."—*Journal of a Soldier of the 71st Regiment during the War in Spain.*

Note 3, page 92, stanza xxxiii.

*To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the sinner!
Because he could no more digest his dinner.*

He was killed in a conspiracy, after his temper had been exasperated by his extreme costivity to a degree of insanity.

Note 4, page 96, stanza xlvii.

And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoi.

He was the "grande passion" of the grande Catherine.—See her Lives under the head of "Lanskoi."

Note 5, page 97, stanza xlix.

*Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess show
His parts of speech.*

This was written long before the suicide of that person.

Note 6, page 102, stanza lxiii.

*Your "Fortune" was in a fair way "to swell
A man" (as Giles says).*

• "His fortune swells him, it is rank, he's married."—Sir Giles Overreach; Massinger. See "A new Way to pay old Debts."

DON JUAN.

CANTO X.

I.

WHEN Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contemplation—
'Tis *said* (for I'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation)—
A mode of proving that the earth turn'd round
In a most natural whirl, called "gravitation;"
And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple.

II.

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,
A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For ever since immortal man hath glow'd
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

III.

And wherefore this exordium?—Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by poesy.

IV.

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail; but for
The stars, I own my telescope is dim;
But at the least I have shunn'd the common shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim
The ocean of eternity: the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have founde'r'd, as doth many a boat.

V.

We left our hero, Juan, in the *bloom*
Of favouritism, but not yet in the *blush*;—
And far be it from my *Muses* to presume
(For I have more than one Muse at a push)
To follow him beyond the drawing-room:
It is enough that Fortune found him flush
Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those things
Which for an instant clip enjoyment's wings.

VI.

But soon they grow again and leave their nest.

“Oh!” saith the Psalmist, “that I had a dove’s
Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!”

And who that recollects young years and loves,—
Though hoary now, and with a withering breast,

And palsied fancy, which no longer roves [rather
Beyond its dimm’d eye’s sphere,—but would much
Sigh like his son, than cough like his grandfather?

VII.

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows’) shrink,

Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,
So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,

Which threatens inundations deep and yellow!
Such difference doth a few months make. You’d think
Grief a rich field which never would lie fallow;
No more it doth, its ploughs but change their boys,
Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

VIII.

But coughs will come when sighs depart—and now

And then before sighs cease; for oft the one
Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow

Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the sun
Of life reach’d ten o’clock: and while a glow,

Hectic and brief as summer’s day nigh done,
O’erspreads the cheek which seems too pure for clay,
Thousands blaze, love, hope, die,—how happy they!—

IX.

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.

We left him in the focus of such glory
As may be won by favour of the moon

Or ladies' fancies—rather transitory
Perhaps; but who would scorn the month of June,
Because December, with his breath so hoary,
Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,
To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

X.

Besides, he had some qualities which fix

Middle-aged ladies even more than young: [chicks
The former know what's what; while new-fledged

Know little more of love than what is sung
In rhymes, or dreamt (for fancy will play tricks)

In visions of those skies from whence Love sprung.
Some reckon women by their suns or years,
I rather think the moon should date the dears.

XI.

And why? because she's changeable and chaste.

I know no other reason, whatsoe'er
Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,

May choose to tax me with; which is not fair,
Nor flattering to "their temper or their taste,"

As my friend Jeffrey writes with such an air:
However, I forgive him, and I trust
He will forgive himself;—if not, I must.

XII.

Old enemies who have become new friends
Should so continue—'tis a point of honour;
And I know nothing which could make amends
For a return to hatred: I would shun her
Like garlic, howsoever she extends
Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes—
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

XIII.

This were the worst desertion:—renegadoes,
Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,
Would scarcely join again the "reformadoes,"⁽¹⁾
Whom he forsook to fill the laureate's sty:
And honest men from Iceland to Barbadoes,
Whether in Caledon or Italy,
Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

XIV.

The lawyer and the critic but behold
The baser sides of literature and life,
And nought remains unseen, but much untold,
By those who scour those double vales of strife.
While common men grow ignorantly old,
The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's knife,
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
And with it all the process of digestion.

XV.

A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,
And that's the reason he himself's so dirty;
The endless soot⁽²⁾ bestows a tint far deeper
Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he
Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,
At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,
In all their habits;—not so *you*, I own;
As Cæsar wore his robe you wear your gown.

XVI.

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine
To make such puppets of us things below),
Are over: Here's a health to "Auld Lang Syne!"
I do not know you, and may never know
Your face—but you have acted on the whole
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

XVII.

And when I use the phrase of "Auld Lang Syne!"
'Tis not address'd to you—the more's the pity
For me, for I would rather take my wine
With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.
But somehow,—it may seem a schoolboy's whine,
And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,
But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
A whole one, and my heart flies to my head,—

XVIII.

As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland, one and all,
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear
streams,

The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's *black wall*,⁽³⁾
All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own pall,
Like Banquo's offspring;—floating past me seems
My childhood in this childishness of mine:
I care not—'tis a glimpse of "Auld Lang Syne."

XIX.

And though, as you remember, in a fit
Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,
I rail'd at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
Which must be own'd was sensitive and surly,
Yet 'tis in vain such sallies to permit,
They cannot quench young feelings fresh and early:
I "*scotch'd* not kill'd" the Scotchman in my blood,
And love the land of "mountain and of flood."

XX.

Don Juan, who was real, or ideal,—

For both are much the same, since what men think
Exists when the once thinkers are less real

Than what they thought, for mind can never sink,
And 'gainst the body makes a strong appeal;

And yet 'tis very puzzling on the brink
Of what is call'd eternity, to stare,
And know no more of what is here, than there;—

XXI.

Don Juan grew a very polish'd Russian—

How we won't mention, *why* we need not say:
Few youthful minds can stand the strong concussion
Of any slight temptation in their way;
But *his* just now were spread as is a cushion
Smooth'd for a monarch's seat of honour: gay
Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
Made ice seem paradise, and winter sunny.

XXII.

The favour of the empress was agreeable;
And though the duty wax'd a little hard,
Young people at his time of life should be able
To come off handsomely in that regard.
He was now growing up like a green tree, able
For love, war, or ambition, which reward
Their luckier votaries, till old age's tedium
Make some prefer the circulating medium.

XXIII.

About this time, as might have been anticipated,
Seduced by youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated;
Which is a sad thing, and not only tramples
On our fresh feelings, but—as being participated
With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity—must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

XXIV.

This we pass over. We will also pass

The usual progress of intrigues between
Unequal matches, such as are, alas!

A young lieutenant's with a *not old* queen,
But one who is not so youthful as she was

In all the royalty of sweet seventeen.

Sovereigns may sway materials, but not matter,
And wrinkles, the d——d democrats, won't flatter.

XXV.

And Death, the sovereign's sovereign, though the great

Gracchus of all mortality, who levels,

With his *Agrarian* laws, the high estate

Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars, and revels,
To one small grass-grown patch (which must await

Corruption for its crop) with the poor devils

Who never had a foot of land till now,—

Death's a reformer, all men must allow.

XXVI.

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry

Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and furry—

Which (though I hate to say a thing that's bitter)

Peep out sometimes, when things are in a flurry,

Through all the "purple and fine linen," fitter

For Babylon's than Russia's royal harlot—

And neutralize her outward show of scarlet.

XXVII.

And this same state we won't describe: we would
Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection;
But getting nigh grim Dante's "obscure wood,"
That horrid equinox, that hateful section
Of human years, that half-way house, that rude
Hut, whence wise travellers drive with circumspection
Life's sad post-horses o'er the dreary frontier
Of age, and looking back to youth, give *one* tear;—

XXVIII.

I won't describe,—that is, if I can help
Description; and I won't reflect—that is,
If I can stave off thought, which—as a whelp
Clings to its teat—sticks to me through the abyss
Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp
Holds by the rock; or as a lover's kiss
Drains its first draught of lips:—but, as I said,
I *won't* philosophize, and *will* be read.

XXIX.

Juan, instead of courting courts, was courted,
A thing which happens rarely: this he owed
Much to his youth, and much to his reported
Valour; much also to the blood he show'd,
Like a race-horse; much to each dress he sported,
Which set the beauty off in which he glow'd,
As purple clouds befringe the sun; but most
He owed to an old woman and his post.

XXX.

He wrote to Spain:— and all his near relations,
Perceiving he was in a handsome way
Of getting on himself, and finding stations
For cousins also, answer'd the same day.
Several prepared themselves for emigrations;
And eating ices, were o'erheard to say,
That with the addition of a slight pelisse,
Madrid's and Moscow's climes were of a-piece.

XXXI.

His mother, Donna Inez, finding too
That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,
Where his assets were waxing rather few,
He had brought his spending to a handsome anchor,—
Replied, “that she was glad to see him through
Those pleasures after which wild youth will hanker ;
As the sole sign of man's being in his senses
Is, learning to reduce his past expenses.

XXXII.

“She also recommended him to God,
And no less to God's Son, as well as Mother,
Warn'd him against Greek worship, which looks odd
In Catholic eyes; but told him too to smother
Outward dislike, which don't look well abroad;
Inform'd him that he had a little brother
Born in a second wedlock; and above
All, praised the empress's *maternal* love.

XXXIII.

“She could not too much give her approbation
Unto an empress, who preferr’d young men
Whose age, and what was better still, whose nation
And climate, stopp’d all scandal (now and then):—
At home it might have given her some vexation;
But where thermometers sunk down to ten,
Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
Believe that virtue thaw’d before the river.”

XXXIV.

Oh for a *forty-parson power* ⁽⁴⁾ to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn
Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
Not practise! Oh for trumps of cherubim!
Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
Who, though her spectacles at last grew dim,
Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
When she no more could read the pious print.

XXXV.

She was no hypocrite at least, poor soul,
But went to heaven in as sincere a way
As any body on the elected roll,
Which portions out upon the judgment day
Heaven’s freeholds, in a sort of doomsday scroll,
Such as the conqueror William did repay
His knights with, lotting others’ properties
Into some sixty thousand new knights’ fees.

XXXVI.

I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
Erneis, Radulphus—eight-and-forty manors
(If that my memory doth not greatly err)
Were their reward for following Billy's banners;
And though I can't help thinking 'twas scarce fair
To strip the Saxons of their *hydes*, ⁽⁵⁾ like tanners;
Yet as they founded churches with the produce,
You'll deem, no doubt, they put it to a good use.

XXXVII.

The gentle Juan flourish'd, though at times
He felt like other plants called sensitive,
Which shrink from touch, as monarchs do from rhymes,
Save such as Southey can afford to give.
Perhaps he long'd in bitter frosts for climes
In which the Neva's ice would cease to live
Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
In royalty's vast arms he sigh'd for beauty:

XXXVIII.

Perhaps,—but, sans perhaps, we need not seek
For causes young or old: the canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
As well as further drain the wither'd form:
Care, like a housekeeper, brings every week
His bills in, and however we may storm,
They must be paid: though six days smoothly run,
The seventh will bring blue devils or a dun.

XXXIX.

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
 The empress was alarm'd, and her physician
 (The same who physick'd Peter) found the tick
 Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
 Which augur'd of the dead, however *quick*
 Itself, and show'd a feverish disposition;
 At which the whole court was extremely troubled,
 The sovereign shock'd, and all his medicines doubled.

XL.

Low were the whispers, manifold the rumours:
 Some said he had been poison'd by Potemkin;
 Others talk'd learnedly of certain tumours,
 Exhaustion, or disorders of the same kin;
 Some said 'twas a concoction of the humours,
 Which with the blood too readily will claim kin;
 Others again were ready to maintain,
 "'Twas only the fatigue of last campaign."

XLI.

But here is one prescription out of many:
 "Sodæ-sulphat. 3. vi. 3. s. Mannæ optim.
 Aq. fervent. F. 3. ifs. 3ij. tinct. Sennæ
 Haustus" (And here the surgeon came and cupp'd him)
 "℞ Pulv. Com. gr. 111. Ipecacuanhæ"
 (With more beside if Juan had not stopp'd 'em).
 "Bolus Potassæ Sulphuret. sumendus,
 Et Haustus ter in die capiendus."

XLII.

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
Secundum artem: but although we sneer
In health—when ill, we call them to attend us,
Without the least propensity to jeer:
While that “hiatus maxime deflendus”
To be fill’d up by spade or mattock’s near,
Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
We tease mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.

XLIII.

Juan demurr’d at this first notice to
Quit; and though death had threaten’d an ejection,
His youth and constitution bore him through,
And sent the doctors in a new direction.
But still his state was delicate: the hue
Of health but flicker’d with a faint reflection
Along his wasted cheek, and seem’d to gravel
The faculty—who said that he must travel.

XLIV.

The climate was too cold, they said, for him,
Meridian-born, to bloom in. This opinion
Made the chaste Catherine look a little grim,
Who did not like at first to lose her minion:
But when she saw his dazzling eye wax dim,
And drooping like an eagle’s with clipt pinion,
She then resolved to send him on a mission,
But in a style becoming his condition.

XLV.

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negotiation
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
Maintain'd with all the due prevarication
With which great states such things are apt to push on;
Something about the Baltic's navigation,
Hides, train-oil, tallow, and the rights of Thetis,
Which Britons deem their "uti possidetis."

XLVI.

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
Of fitting out her favourites, conferr'd
This secret charge on Juan, to display
At once her royal splendour, and reward
His services. He kiss'd hands the next day,
Received instructions how to play his card,
Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
Which show'd what great discernment was the donor's.

XLVII.

But she was lucky, and luck's all. Your queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning;
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means.
But to continue: though her years were waning,
Her climacteric teased her like her teens;
And though her dignity brook'd no complaining,
So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
She could not find at first a fit successor.

XLVIII.

But time, the comforter, will come at last;
And four-and-twenty hours, and twice that number
Of candidates requesting to be placed,
Made Catherine taste next night a quiet slumber:—
Not that she meant to fix again in haste,
Nor did she find the quantity encumber,
But always choosing with deliberation,
Kept the place open for their emulation.

XLIX.

While this high post of honour's in abeyance,
For one or two days, reader, we request
You'll mount with our young hero the conveyance
Which wafted him from Petersburg: the best
Barouche, which had the glory to display once
The fair czarina's autocratic crest,
When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris,
Was given to her favourite, ⁽⁶⁾ and now *bore his*.

L.

A bull-dog, and a bullfinch, and an ermine,
All private favourites of Don Juan;—for
(Let deeper sages the true cause determine)
He had a kind of inclination, or
Weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin,
Live animals: an old maid of threescore
For cats and birds more penchant ne'er display'd,
Although he was not old, nor even a maid;—

LI.

The animals aforesaid occupied

Their station: there were valets, secretaries,
In other vehicles; but at his side

Sat little Leila, who survived the parries
He made 'gainst Cossacque sabres, in the wide

Slaughter of Ismail. Though my wild Muse varies
Her note, she don't forget the infant girl
Whom he preserved, a pure and living pearl.

LII.

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,

And with that gentle, serious character,
As rare in living beings as a fossile

Man, 'midstthymouldy mammoths, "grand Cuvier!"
Ill fitted was her ignorance to jostle

With this o'erwhelming world, where all must err:
But she was yet but ten years old, and therefore
Was tranquil, though she knew not why or wherefore.

LIII.

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as

Nor brother, father, sister, daughter love.
I cannot tell exactly what it was;

He was not yet quite old enough to prove
Parental feelings, and the other class,

Call'd brotherly affection, could not move
His bosom,—for he never had a sister:
Ah! if he had, how much he would have miss'd her!

LIV.

And still less was it sensual; for besides

That he was not an ancient debauchee
(Who like sour fruit, to stir their veins' salt tides,
As acids rouse a dormant alkali),

Although (*'twill* happen as our planet guides)

His youth was not the chastest that might be,
There was the purest platonism at bottom
Of all his feelings—only he forgot 'em.

LV.

Just now there was no peril of temptation;

He loved the infant orphan he had saved,
As patriots (now and then) may love a nation;
His pride too felt that she was not enslaved

Owing to him;—as also her salvation

Through his means and the church's might be paved.
But one thing's odd, which here must be inserted,
The little Turk refused to be converted.

LVI.

'Twas strange enough she should retain the impression
Through such a scene of change, and dread, and
slaughter;

But though three bishops told her the transgression,

She show'd a great dislike to holy water:

She also had no passion for confession;

Perhaps she had nothing to confess:—no matter;

Whate'er the cause, the church made little of it—

She still held out that Mahomet was a prophet.

LVII.

In fact, the only Christian she could bear

Was Juan; whom she seem'd to have selected
In place of what her home and friends once *were*.

He *naturally* loved what he protected:
And thus they form'd a rather curious pair,

A guardian green in years, a ward connected
In neither clime, time, blood, with her defender;
And yet this want of ties made theirs more tender.

LVIII.

They journey'd on through Poland and through War-

Famous for mines of salt and yokes of iron: [saw,
Through Courland also, which that famous farce saw

Which gave her dukes the graceless name of
"Biron."⁽⁷⁾

'Tis the same landscape which the modern Mars saw,

Who march'd to Moscow, led by Fame, the siren!
To lose by one month's frost some twenty years
Of conquest, and his guard of grenadiers.

LIX.

Let this not seem an anti-climax:—"Oh!

Myguard! my old guard!" exclaim'd that god of clay.
Think of the Thunderer's falling down below

Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh!
Alas! that glory should be chill'd by snow!

But should we wish to warm us on our way
Through Poland, there is Kościusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla's flame.

LX.

From Poland they came on through Prussia Proper,
And Königsberg the capital, whose vaunt,
Besides some veins of iron, lead, or copper,
Has lately been the great Professor Kant.
Juan, who cared not a tobacco-stopper
About philosophy, pursued his jaunt
To Germany, whose somewhat tardy millions
Have princes who spur more than their postillions.

LXI.

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and the like,
Until he reach'd the castellated Rhine:—
Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye strike
All phantasies, not even excepting mine:
A gray wall, a green ruin, rusty pike,
Make my soul pass the equinoctial line
Between the present and past worlds, and hover
Upon their airy confine, half-seas-over.

LXII.

But Juan posted on through Manheim, Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a spectre
Of the good feudal times for ever gone,
On which I have not time just now to lecture.
From thence he was drawn onwards to Cologne,
A city which presents to the inspector
Eleven thousand maidenheads of bone,
The greatest number flesh hath ever known.⁽⁸⁾

LXIII.

From thence to Holland's Hague and Helvoetsluys,
That water-land of Dutchmen and of ditches,
Where juniper expresses its best juice,
The poor man's sparkling substitute for riches.
Senates and sages have condemn'd its use—
But to deny the mob a cordial, which is
Too often all the clothing, meat, or fuel,
Good government has left them, seems but cruel.

LXIV.

Here he embark'd, and with a flowing sail
Went bounding for the island of the free,
Towards which the impatient wind blew half a gale:
High dash'd the spray, the bows dipp'd in the sea,
And sea-sick passengers turn'd somewhat pale;
But Juan, season'd, as he well might be,
By former voyages, stood to watch the skiffs
Which pass'd, or catch the first glimpse of the cliffs.

LXV.

At length they rose, like a white wall along
The blue sea's border; and Don Juan felt—
What even young strangers feel a little strong
At the first sight of Albion's chalky belt—
A kind of pride that he should be among
Those haughty shopkeepers, who sternly dealt
Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,
And made the very billows pay them toll.

LXVI.

I've no great cause to love that spot of earth,
Which holds what *might have been* the noblest nation ;
But though I owe it little but my birth,
I feel a mix'd regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.
Seven years (the usual term of transportation)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country's going to the devil.

LXVII.

Alas! could she but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout abhorr'd;
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the sword;
How all the nations deem her their worst foe,
That worse than *worst of foes*, the once adored
False friend, who held out freedom to mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very mind;—

LXVIII.

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free,
Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison,—but the jailer, what is he?
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.
Is the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, freedom? He's as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who wear.

LXIX.

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest beauties,
Thy cliffs, *dear* Dover! harbour, and hotel;
Thy custom-house, with all its delicate duties;
Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

LXX.

Juan, though careless, young, and magnifque,
And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and credit,
Who did not limit much his bills per week,
Yet stared at this a little, though he paid it,—
(His Maggior Duomo, a smart, subtle Greek,
Before him summ'd the awful scroll and read it:)
But doubtless as the air, though seldom sunny,
Is free, the respiration's worth the money.

LXXI.

On with the horses! Off to Canterbury! [puddle;
Tramp, tramp o'er pebble, and splash, splash through
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry!
Not like slow Germany, wherein they muddle
Along the road, as if they went to bury
Their fare; and also pause besides, to fuddle
With "schnapps"—sad dogs! whom "Hundsot" or
"Ferflucter"
Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

LXXII.

Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed—no matter where its
Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits;
For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
At the great *end* of travel—which is driving.

LXXIII.

They saw at Canterbury the cathedral;
Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody stone,
Were pointed out as usual by the bedral,
In the same quaint, uninterested tone:—
There's glory again for you, gentle reader! All
Ends in a rusty casque and dubious bone,
Half-solved into those sodas or magnesias,
Which form that bitter draught, the human species.

LXXIV.

The effect on Juan was of course sublime:
He breathed a thousand Cressys, as he saw
That casque, which never stoop'd except to Time.
Even the bold churchman's tomb excited awe,
Who died in the then great attempt to climb
O'er kings, who *now* at least *must talk* of law
Before they butcher. Little Leila gazed,
And asked why such a structure had been raised:

LXXV.

And being told it was "God's house," she said
He was well lodged, but only wonder'd how
He suffer'd Infidels in his homestead,
The cruel Nazarenes, who had laid low
His holy temples in the lands which bred
The True Believers;—and her infant brow
Was bent with grief that Mahomet should resign
A mosque so noble, flung like pearls to swine.

LXXVI.

On, on, through meadows, managed like a garden,
A paradise of hops and high production;
For after years of travel by a bard in
Countries of greater heat, but lesser suction,
A green field is a sight which makes him pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction,
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanos, oranges, and ices.

LXXVII.

And when I think upon a pot of beer——
But I won't weep!—and so drive on, postillions!
As the smart boys spurr'd fast in their career,
Juan admired these highways of free millions;
A country in all senses the most dear
To foreigner or native, save some silly ones,
Who "kick against the pricks" just at this juncture,
And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

LXXVIII.

What a delightful thing's a turnpike road!

So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving
The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad

Air can accomplish, with his wide wings waving.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the god

Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail;—but onward as we roll,
“Surgit amari aliquid”—the toll!

LXXIX.

Alas! how deeply painful is all payment!

Take lives, take wives, take aught except men's purses.
As Machiavel shows those in purple raiment,

Such is the shortest way to general curses.
They hate a murderer much less than a claimant

On that sweet ore which every body nurses.—
Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,
But keep your hands out of his breeches' pocket:

LXXX.

So said the Florentine: ye monarchs, hearken

To your instructor. Juan now was borne,
Just as the day began to wane and darken,

O'er the high hill, which looks with pride or scorn
Toward the great city.—Ye who have a spark in

Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or mourn
According as you take things well or ill;—
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill!

LXXXI.

The sun went down, the smoke rose up, as from
A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseem'd the "Devil's drawing-room,"
As some have qualified that wondrous place:
But Juan felt, though not approaching *home*,
As one who, though he were not of the race,
Revered the soil, of those true sons the mother,
Who butcher'd half the earth, and bullied t'other.⁽⁹⁾

LXXXII.

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head—and there is London Town!

LXXXIII.

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of smoke
Appear'd to him but as the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper):
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
Are bow'd, and put the sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

LXXXIV.

He paused—and so will I; as doth a crew
Before they give their broadside. By and by,
My gentle countrymen, we will renew
Our old acquaintance; and at least I'll try
To tell you truths *you* will not take as true,
Because they are so;—a male Mrs. Fry,
With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

LXXXV.

Oh Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why
Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore not begin
With C—lt—n, or with other houses? Try
Your hand at harden'd and imperial sin.
To mend the people's an absurdity,
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better:—Fy!
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

LXXXVI.

Teach them the decencies of good threescore;
Cure them of tours, hussar and highland dresses;
Tell them that youth once gone returns no more,
That hired huzzas redeem no land's distresses;
Tell them Sir W—ll—m C—t—s is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses,
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all.

LXXXVII.

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late
On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated, sated,
To set up vain pretences of being great,
'Tis not so to be good; and be it stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least state;
And tell them——But you won't, and I have prated
Just now enough; but by and by I'll prattle
Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.

NOTES TO CANTO X.

Note 1, page 117, stanza xiii.

Would scarcely join again the "reformadoes."

"Reformers," or rather "Reformed." The Baron Bradwardine, in *Waverley*, is authority for the word.

Note 2, page 118, stanza xv.

The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper.

Query, *suit?*—Printer's Devil.

Note 3, page 119, stanza xviii.

The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's black wall.

The brig of Don, near the "auld toun" of Aberdeen, with its one arch and its black deep salmon stream below, is in my memory as yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote, the awful proverb which made me pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with a childish delight, being an only son, at least by the mother's side. The saying as recollected by me was this, but I have never heard or seen it since I was nine years of age :

"Brig of Balgounie, black's your wa',
Wi' a wife's *ae son*, and a mear's *ae foal*,
Doun ye shall fa'!"

Note 4, page 124, stanza xxxiv.

*Oh for a forty-parson power to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy!*

A metaphor taken from the "forty-horse power" of a steam-engine. That mad wag, the Reverend S. S., sitting by a brother clergyman at dinner, observed afterwards that his dull neighbour had a "*twelve-parson power*" of conversation.

Note 5, page 125, stanza xxxvi.

To strip the Saxons of their hydes, like tanners.

“Hyde.”—I believe a hyde of land to be a legitimate word, and as such subject to the tax of a quibble.

Note 6, page 129, stanza xlix.

Was given to her favourite, and now bore his.

The empress went to the Crimea, accompanied by the Emperor Joseph, in the year—I forget which.

Note 7, page 132, stanza lviii.

Which gave her dukes the graceless name of “Biron.”

In the Empress Anne’s time Biren, her favourite, assumed the name and arms of the “Birons” of France, which families are yet extant with that of England: there are still the daughters of Courland of that name; one of them I remember seeing in England in the blessed year of the allies—the Duchess of S.—to whom the English Duchess of S——t presented me as a namesake.

Note 8, page 133, stanza lxii.

The greatest number flesh hath ever known.

St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins were still extant in 1816, and may be so yet as much as ever.

Note 9, page 140, stanza lxxxi.

Who butcher’d half the earth, and bullied t’ other.

India; America.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XI.

I.

WHEN Bishop Berkeley said "there was no matter,"
And proved it—'twas no matter what he said:
They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it? I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,
Or adamant, to find the world a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

II.

What a sublime discovery 't was to make the
Universe universal egotism,
That all's ideal—*all ourselves*: I'll stake the
World (be it what you will) that *that's* no schism.
Oh Doubt!—if thou be'st Doubt, for which some take
thee,
But which I doubt extremely—thou sole prism
Of the Truth's rays, spoil not my draught of spirit!
Heaven's brandy, though our brain can hardly bear it.

III.

For ever and anon comes Indigestion,
 (Not the most "dainty Ariel") and perplexes
Our soarings with another sort of question:
 And that which after all my spirit vexes,
Is, that I find no spot where man can rest eye on,
 Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,
Of beings, stars, and this unriddled wonder,
The world, which at the worst's a glorious blunder—

IV.

If it be chance; or if it be according
 'To the old text, still better:—lest it should
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,
 As several people think such hazards rude.
They're right; our days are too brief for affording
 Space to dispute what *no one* ever could
Decide, and *every body one day* will
Know very clearly—or at least lie still.

V.

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical
 Discussion, which is neither here nor there:
If I agree that what is, is; then this I call
 Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair;
The truth is, I've grown lately rather phthisical:
 I don't know what the reason is—the air
Perhaps; but as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

VI.

The first attack at once proved the Divinity
(But *that* I never doubted, nor the Devil);
The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity;
The third, the usual Origin of Evil;
The fourth at once establish'd the whole Trinity
On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wish'd the three were four,
On purpose to believe so much the more.

VII.

To our theme.—The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
And look'd down over Attica; or he
Who has sail'd where picturesque Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea
In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metropolis,
Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first appearance—
But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence?

VIII.

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's hill;
Sunset the time, the place the same declivity
Which looks along that vale of good and ill
Where London streets ferment in full activity;
While every thing around was calm and still,
Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he
Heard,—and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum
Of cities, that boil over with their scum:—

IX.

I say, Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation,
Walk'd on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,
And lost in wonder of so great a nation,
Gave way to't, since he could not overcome it.
"And here," he cried, "is Freedom's chosen station;
Here peals the people's voice, nor can entomb it
Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

X.

"Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here people pay
But what they please; and if that things be dear,
'Tis only that they love to throw away
Their cash, to show how much they have a-year.
Here laws are all inviolate; none lay
Traps for the traveller; every highway's clear:
Here—" he was interrupted by a knife,
With,—“Damn your eyes! your money or your life!”—

XI.

These freeborn sounds proceeded from four pads
In ambush laid, who had perceived him loiter
Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,
Had seized the lucky hour to reconnoitre,
In which the heedless gentleman who gads
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter,
May find himself within that isle of riches
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

XII.

Juan, who did not understand a word

Of English, save their shibboleth, "God damn!"
And even that he had so rarely heard,

He sometimes thought 'twas only their "Salām,"
Or "God be with you!"—and 'tis not absurd

To think so: for half English as I am
(To my misfortune) never can I say
I heard them wish "God with you," save that way;—

XIII.

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,

And being somewhat choleric and sudden,
Drew forth a pocket pistol from his vesture,

And fired it into one assailant's pudding—
Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,

And roar'd out, as he writhed his native mud in,
Unto his nearest follower or henchman,
"Oh Jack! I'm floor'd by that 'ere bloody Frenchman!"

XIV.

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,

And Juan's suite, late scatter'd at a distance,
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,

And offering, as usual, late assistance.

Juan, who saw the moon's late minion bleed

As if his veins would pour out his existence,
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
And wish'd he had been less hasty with his flint.

XV.

“Perhaps,” thought he, “it is the country’s wont
To welcome foreigners in this way: now
I recollect some innkeepers who don’t
Differ, except in robbing with a bow,
In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front.
But what is to be done? I can’t allow
The fellow to lie groaning on the road:
So take him up; I’ll help you with the load.”

XVI.

But ere they could perform this pious duty,
The dying man cried, “Hold! I’ve got my gruel!
Oh! for a glass of *max*! We’ve miss’d our booty;
Let me die where I am!” And as the fuel
Of life shrunk in his heart, and thick and sooty
The drops fell from his death-wound, and he drew ill
His breath,—he from his swelling throat untied
A kerchief, crying, “Give Sal that!”—and died.

XVII.

The cravat stain’d with bloody drops fell down
Before Don Juan’s feet: he could not tell
Exactly why it was before him thrown,
Nor what the meaning of the man’s farewell.
Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,
A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell,
Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,
His pockets first and then his body riddled.

XVIII.

Don Juan, having done the best he could

In all the circumstances of the case,
As soon as "Crownier's quest" allow'd, pursued

His travels to the capital apace;—
Esteeming it a little hard he should

In twelve hours' time, and very little space,
Have been obliged to slay a freeborn native
In self-defence: this made him meditative.

XIX.

He from the world had cut off a great man,

Who in his time had made heroic bustle.

Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,

Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?

Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bow-street's ban)

On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?

Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing),

So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing? ⁽¹⁾

XX.

But Tom's no more—and so no more of Tom.

Heroes must die; and by God's blessing 'tis
Not long before the most of them go home.

Hail! Themis, hail! Upon thy verge it is
That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum

In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss,
Through Kennington and all the other "tons,"
Which make us wish ourselves in town at once;—

XXI.

Through Groves, so call'd as being void of trees,
 (Like *lucus* from *no* light); through prospects named
Mount Pleasant, as containing nought to please,
 Nor much to climb; through little boxes framed
Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,
 With "To be let," upon their doors proclaim'd;
Through "Rows" most modestly call'd "Paradise,"
Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice;—

XXII.

Through coaches, drays, choked turnpikes, and a whirl
 Of wheels, and roar of voices, and confusion;
Here taverns wooing to a pint of "purl,"
 There mails fast flying off like a delusion;
There barbers' blocks with periwigs in curl
 In windows; here the lamplighter's infusion
Slowly distill'd into the glimmering glass
(For in those days we had not got to gas—);

XXIII.

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach
 Of travellers to mighty Babylon:
Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,
 With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.
I could say more, but do not choose to encroach
 Upon the guide-book's privilege. The sun
Had set some time, and night was on the ridge
Of twilight, as the party cross'd the bridge.

XXIV.

That's rather fine, the gentle sound of Thamis—
Who vindicates a moment too his stream—
Though hardly heard through multifarious "damme's."
The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,
The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where fame is
A spectral resident—whose pallid beam
In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile—
Make this a sacred part of Albion's isle.

XXV.

The Druids' groves are gone—so much the better:
Stone-Henge is not—but what the devil is it?—
But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,
That madmen may not bite you on a visit;
The Bench too seats or suits full many a debtor;
The Mansion-house too (though some people quiz it)
To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;
But then the Abbey's worth the whole collection.

XXVI.

The line of lights too up to Charing Cross,
Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation
Like gold as in comparison to dross,
Match'd with the continent's illumination,
Whose cities Night by no means deigns to gloss.
The French were not yet a lamp-lighting nation,
And when they grew so—on their new-found lantern,
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man turn.

XXVII.

A row of gentlemen along the streets
Suspended, may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country seats;
But the old way is best for the purblind:
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of ignis fatuus to the mind,
Which, though 'tis certain to perplex and frighten,
Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.

XXVIII.

But London's so well lit, that if Diogenes
Could recommence to hunt his *honest man*,
And found him not amidst the various progenies
Of this enormous city's spreading spawn,
'Twere not for want of lamps to aid his dodging his
Yet undiscover'd treasure. What *I* can,
I've done to find the same throughout life's journey,
But see the world is only one attorney.

XXIX.

Over the stones still rattling, up Pall Mall,
Through crowds and carriages, but waxing thinner
As thunder'd knockers broke the long seal'd spell
Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early dinner
Admitted a small party as night fell,—
Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner,
Pursued his path, and drove past some hotels,
St. James's Palace and St. James's "Hells."⁽²⁾

XXX.

They reach'd the hotel: forth stream'd from the front
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around [door
'The mob stood, and as usual several score
Of those pedestrian Paphians who abound
In decent London when the daylight's o'er;
Commodious but immoral, they are found
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage.—
But Juan now is stepping from his carriage

XXXI.

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,
Especially for foreigners—and mostly
For those whom favour or whom fortune swells,
And cannot find a bill's small items costly.
There many an envoy either dwelt or dwells
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie),
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,
And blazon o'er the door their names in brass.

XXXII.

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
Private, though publicly important, bore
No title to point out with due precision
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.
'Twas merely known, that on a secret mission
A foreigner of rank had graced our shore,
Young, handsome, and accomplish'd, who was said
(In whispers) to have turn'd his sovereign's head.

XXXIII.

Some rumour also of some strange adventures
Had gone before him, and his wars and loves;
And as romantic heads are pretty painters,
And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures
Of sober reason, wheresoe'er it moves,
He found himself extremely in the fashion,
Which serves our thinking people for a passion.

XXXIV.

I don't mean that they are passionless, but quite
The contrary; but then 'tis in the head;
Yet as the consequences are as bright
As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site
Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or heart?

XXXV.

Juan presented in the proper place,
To proper placemen, every Russ credential;
And was received with all the due grimace,
By those who govern in the mood potential,
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)
That they as easily might *do* the youngster,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland songster.

XXXVI.

They err'd, as aged men will do; but by
And by we'll talk of that; and if we don't,
'Twill be because our notion is not high
Of politicians and their double front,
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie:—
Now what I love in women is, they won't
Or can't do otherwise than lie, but do it
So well, the very truth seems falsehood to it.

XXXVII.

And, after all, what is a lie? 'Tis but
The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests, to put
A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
Up annals, revelations, poesy,
And prophecy—except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.

XXXVIII.

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now
Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?
She rings the world's "Te Deum," and her brow
Blushes for those who will not:—but to sigh
Is idle; let us like most others bow,
Kiss hands, feet, any part of majesty,
After the good example of "Green Erin,"
Whose shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.

XXXIX.

Don Juan was presented, and his dress
And mien excited general admiration—
I don't know which was more admired or less:
One monstrous diamond drew much observation,
Which Catherine in a moment of "ivresse"
(In love or brandy's fervent fermentation).
Bestow'd upon him, as the public learn'd;
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earn'd.

XL.

Besides the ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,
Until their royal riddle's fully read,
The very clerks,—those somewhat dirty springs
Of office, or the house of office, fed
By foul corruption into streams,—even they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay:

XLI.

And insolence no doubt is what they are
Employ'd for, since it is their daily labour,
In the dear offices of peace or war; [bour,
And should you doubt, pray ask of your next neigh-
When for a passport, or some other bar
To freedom, he applied (a grief and a bore),
If he found not this spawn of taxborn riches,
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b——s.

XLII.

But Juan was received with much "empressement:"—

These phrases of refinement I must borrow
From our next neighbours' land, where, like a chessman,

There is a move set down for joy or sorrow
Not only in mere talking, but the press. Man

In islands is, it seems, downright and thorough,
More than on continents—as if the sea
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free.

XLIII.

And yet the British "Damme"'s rather Attic:

Your continental oaths are but incontinent,
And turn on things which no aristocratic [anent⁽³⁾

Spirit would name, and therefore even I won't
This subject quote; as it would be schismatic

In politesse, and have a sound affronting in't:—
But "Damme"'s quite ethereal, though too daring—
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.

XLIV.

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;

For true or false politeness (and scarce *that*
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white foam—

The first the emblem (rarely though) of what
You leave behind, the next of much you come

To meet. However, 'tis no time to chat
On general topics: poems must confine
Themselves to unity, like this of mine.

XLV.

In the great world,—which being interpreted
Meaneth the west or worst end of a city,
And about twice two thousand people bred
By no means to be very wise or witty,
But to sit up while others lie in bed,
And look down on the universe with pity,—
Juan, as an inveterate patrician,
Was well received by persons of condition.

XLVI.

He was a bachelor, which is a matter
Of import both to virgin and to bride,
The former's hymeneal hopes to flatter;
And (should she not hold fast by love or pride)
'Tis also of some moment to the latter:
A rib's a thorn in a wed gallant's side,
Requires decorum, and is apt to double
The horrid sin—and what's still worse, the trouble.

XLVII.

But Juan was a bachelor—of arts,
And parts, and hearts: he danced and sung, and had
An air as sentimental as Mozart's
Softest of melodies; and could be sad
Or cheerful, without any “flaws or starts,”
Just at the proper time; and though a lad,
Had seen the world—which is a curious sight,
And very much unlike what people write.

XLVIII.

Fair virgins blush'd upon him; wedded dames
Bloom'd also in less transitory hues;
For both commodities dwell by the Thames,
The painting and the painted; youth, ceruse,
Against his heart preferr'd their usual claims,
Such as no gentleman can quite refuse:
Daughters admired his dress, and pious mothers
Inquired his income, and if he had brothers.

XLIX.

The milliners who furnish "drapery Misses"⁽⁴⁾
Throughout the season, upon speculation
Of payment ere the honey-moon's last kisses
Have waned into a crescent's coruscation,
Thought such an opportunity as this is,
Of a rich foreigner's initiation,
Not to be overlook'd—and gave such credit,
That future bridegrooms swore, and sigh'd, and paid it.

L.

The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets,
And with the pages of the last Review
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanced in all their azure's highest hue:
They talk'd bad French or Spanish, and upon its
Late authors ask'd him for a hint or two;
And which was softest, Russian or Castilian?
And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?

LI.

Juan, who was a little superficial,
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,
Examined by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer:
His duties warlike, loving or official,
His steady application as a dancer,
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,
Which now he found was blue instead of green.

LII.

However, he replied at hazard, with
A modest confidence and calm assurance,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And pass'd for arguments of good endurance.
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith,
(Who at sixteen translated "Hercules Furens"
Into as furious English) with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.

LIII.

Juan knew several languages—as well
He might—and brought them up with skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplish'd belle,
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.
There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualities (with them) into sublime:
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish,
Both long'd extremely to be sung in Spanish.

LIV.

However, he did pretty well, and was
Admitted as an aspirant to all
The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,
At great assemblies or in parties small,
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
That being about their average numeral;
Also the eighty "greatest living poets,"
As every paltry magazine can show *it's*.

LV.

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing.
Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king,—
Was reckon'd, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

LVI.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain:
"La Belle Alliance" of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion's fall'n, may rise again:
But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
Or to some lonely isle of jailors go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

LVII.

Sir Walter reigned before me; Moore and Campbell
 Before and after; but now grown more holy,
 The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
 With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;

* * * * *

LVIII.

* * * * *

LIX.

Then there's my gentle Euphues; who, they say,
 Sets up for being a sort of *moral me*;
 He'll find it rather difficult some day
 To turn out both, or either, it may be.
 Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;
 And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three;
 And that deep-mouth'd Bœotian "Savage Landor"
 Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

LX.

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,
Just as he really promised something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,⁽⁵⁾
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

LXI.

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders
To that which none will gain—or none will know
The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances;—they're too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd but dirty.

LXII.

This is the literary *lower* empire,
Where the prætorian bands take up the matter;—
A "dreadful trade," like his who "gathers samphire,"
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,
With the same feelings as you'd coax a vampire.
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

LXIII.

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
Their flanks;—but it is hardly worth my while
With such small gear to give myself concern:
Indeed I've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper's really aught but stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof's a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

LXIV.

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
Amongst live poets and blue ladies, past
With some small profit through that field so sterile.
Being tired in time, and neither least nor last
Left it before he had been treated very ill;
And henceforth found himself more gaily class'd
Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
The sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.

LXV.

His morns he pass'd in business—which dissected,
Was like all business, a laborious nothing,
That leads to lassitude, the most infected
And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal clothing,
And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,
And talk in tender horrors of our loathing
All kinds of toil, save for our country's good—
Which grows no better, though 'tis time it should.

LXVI.

His afternoons he pass'd in visits, luncheons,
Lounging, and boxing; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons [flower
Call'd "Parks," where there is neither fruit nor
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
But after all it is the only "bower,"
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

LXVII.

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!
Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar
Through street and square fast flashing chariots hurl'd
Like harness'd meteors; then along the floor
Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are twirl'd;
Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few
An earthly Paradise of "Or Molu."

LXVIII.

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink
With the three-thousandth curtsy; there the waltz,
The only dance which teaches girls to think,
Makes one in love even with its very faults.
Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their brink,
And long the latest of arrivals halts,
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemn'd to climb,
And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

LXIX.

Thrice happy he who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,
A door that's *in*, or boudoir *out* of the way,
Where he may fix himself like small "Jack Horner,"
And let the Babel round run as it may,
And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
Yawning a little as the night grows later.

LXX.

But this won't do, save by and by; and he
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share,
Must steer with care through all that glittering sea
Of gems and plumes and pearls and silks, to where
He deems it is his proper place to be;
Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.

LXXI.

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views
Upon an heiress or his neighbour's bride,
Let him take care that that which he pursues
Is not at once too palpably descried.
Full many an eager gentleman oft rues
His haste: impatience is a blundering guide
Amongst a people famous for reflection,
Who like to play the fool with circumspection.

LXXII.

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;
Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle:—
Oh ye ambrosial moments! always upper
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,
Which sits for ever upon memory's crupper,
The ghost of vanish'd pleasures once in vogue! Ill
Can tender souls relate the rise and fall
Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

LXXIII.

But these precautionary hints can touch
Only the common run, who must pursue,
And watch, and ward; whose plans a word too much
Or little overturns; and not the few
Or many (for the number's sometimes such)
Whom a good mien, especially if new,
Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense, or nonsense,
Permits whate'er they please, or *did* not long since.

LXXIV.

Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome,
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,
Like other slaves of course must pay his ransom
Before he can escape from so much danger
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and "rack and manger,"
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble;—
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

LXXV.

They are young, but know not youth—it is anticipated;
Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated;
Their cash comes *from*, their wealth goes *to* a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes participated
Between the tyrant's and the tribunes' crew;
And having voted, dined, drank, gamed, and whored,
The family vault receives another lord.

LXXVI.

“Where is the world,” cries Young, “at *eighty*? Where
The world in which a man was born?” Alas!
Where is the world of *eight* years past? ‘*Twas there—*
I look for it—’tis gone, a globe of glass!
Crack’d, shiver’d, vanish’d, scarcely gazed on, ere
A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.
Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,
And dandies, all are gone on the wind’s wings.

LXXVII.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows:
Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:
Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those
Who bound the bar or senate in their spell?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes?
And where the Daughter, whom the Isles loved well?
Where are those martyr’d saints the Five per Cents?
And where—oh where the devil are the rents?

LXXVIII.

Where's Brummel? Dish'd. Where's Long Pole
Wellesley? Diddled. [the Third?

Where's Whitbread? Romilly? Where's George
Where is his will? (That's not so soon unriddled)

And where is "Fum" the Fourth, our "royal bird?"
Gone down it seems to Scotland to be fiddled

Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard:
"Caw me, caw thee"—for six months hath been hatching
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

LXXIX.

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady That?

The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?

Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,

Married, unmarried, and remarried: (this is
An evolution oft performed of late).

Where are the Dublin shouts—and London hisses?
Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd as usual. Where
My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were.

LXXX.

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses?

Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye annals
So brilliant, where the list of routs and dances is,—

Thou Morning Post, sole record of the pannels
Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies

Of fashion,—say what streams now fill those channels?
Some die, some fly, some languish on the continent,
Because the times have hardly left them *one* tenant.

LXXXI.

Some who once set their caps at cautious dukes,
Have taken up at length with younger brothers:
Some heiresses have bit at sharpeners' hooks: [mothers;
Some maids have been made wives, some merely
Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks:
In short, the list of alterations bothers.
There's little strange in this, but something strange is
The unusual quickness of these common changes.

LXXXII.

Talk not of seventy years as age; in seven
I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to
The humblest individual under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century through.
I knew that nought was lasting, but now even
Change grows too changeable, without being new:
Nought's permanent among the human race,
Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

LXXXIII.

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite a Jupiter,
Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a duke
(No matter which) turn politician stupider,
If that can well be, than his wooden look.
But it is time that I should hoist my "blue Peter"
And sail for a new theme:—I have seen—and shook
To see it—the king hiss'd, and then carest;
But don't pretend to settle which was best.

LXXXIV.

I have seen the landholders without a rap—

I have seen Joanna Southcote—I have seen
The House of Commons turn'd to a tax-trap—

I have seen that sad affair of the late queen—
I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's cap—

I have seen a congress doing all that's mean—
I have seen some nations like o'erloaded asses
Kick off their burthens—meaning the high classes.

LXXXV.

I have seen small poets, and great prozers, and

Interminable—*not eternal*—speakers—

I have seen the funds at war with house and land—

I have seen the country gentlemen turn squeakers—
I have seen the people ridden o'er like sand

By slaves on horseback—I have seen malt liquors
Exchanged for "thin potations" by John Bull—
I have seen John half detect himself a fool.—

LXXXVI.

But "Carpe diem," Juan, "Carpe, carpe!"

To-morrow sees another race as gay
And transient, and devour'd by the same harpy.

"Life's a poor player,"—then "play out the play,
Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp eye

Much less on what you do than what you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you *seem*, but always what you *see*.

LXXXVII.

But how shall I relate in other cantos
Of what befell our hero in the land,
Which 'tis the common cry and lie to vaunt as
A moral country? But I hold my hand—
For I disdain to write an Atalantis;
But 'tis as well at once to understand
You are *not* a moral people, and you know it
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

LXXXVIII.

What Juan saw and underwent shall be
My topic, with of course the due restriction
Which is required by proper courtesy;
And recollect the work is only fiction,
And that I sing of neither mine nor me,
Though every scribe, in some slight turn of diction,
Will hint allusions never *meant*. Ne'er doubt
This—when I speak, I *don't hint*, but *speak out*.

LXXXIX.

Whether he married with the third or fourth
Offspring of some sage husband-hunting countess,
Or whether with some virgin of more worth
(I mean in Fortune's matrimonial bounties)
He took to regularly peopling Earth,
Of which your lawful awful wedlock fount is,—
Or whether he was taken in for damages,
For being too excursive in his homages,—

XC.

Is yet within the unread events of time.

Thus far, go forth, thou lay, which I will back
Against the same given quantity of rhyme,

For being as much the subject of attack
As ever yet was any work sublime,

By those who love to say that white is black.
So much the better!—I may stand alone,
But would not change my free thoughts for a throne.

NOTES TO CANTO XI.

Note 1, page 151, stanza xix.

Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle, &c.

The advance of science and of language has rendered it unnecessary to translate the above good and true English, spoken in its original purity by the select mobility and their patrons. The following is a stanza of a song which was very popular, at least in my early days:

- “ On the high toby-spice flash the muzzle,
In spite of each gallows old scout;
If you at the spellken can't hustle,
You 'll be hobbled in making a Clout.
- “ Then your Blowing will wax gallows haughty,
When she hears of your scaly mistake,
She'll surely turn snitch for the forty—
That her Jack may be regular weight.”

If there be any gemman so ignorant as to require a traduction, I refer him to my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson, Esq., Professor of Pugilism; who I trust still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humour and athletic as well as mental accomplishments.

Note 2, page 154, stanza xxix.

St. James's Palace and St. James's “ Hells.”

“ Hells,” gaming-houses. What their number may now be in this life, I know not. Before I was of age I knew them pretty accurately, both “gold” and “silver.” I was once nearly called out by an acquaintance, because when he asked me where I thought that his soul would be found hereafter, I answered, “ In Silver Hell.”

Note 3, page 159, stanza xliii.

..... *therefore even I won't anent*
This subject quote.

"Anent" was a Scotch phrase meaning "concerning"—
 "with regard to:" it has been made English by the Scotch
 novels; and, as the Frenchman said, "*If it be not, ought to be*
English."

Note 4, page 161, stanza xlix.

The milliners who furnish "drapery Misses."

"Drapery Misses"—This term is probably any thing now but
 a *mystery*. It was however almost so to me when I first returned
 from the East in 1811—1812. It means a pretty, a high-born, a
 fashionable young female, well instructed by her friends, and
 furnished by her milliner with a wardrobe upon credit, to be
 repaid, when *married*, by the *husband*. The riddle was first read
 to me by a young and pretty heiress, on my praising the "drapery"
 of the "*untochered*" but "pretty virginities" (like Mrs. Anne
 Page) of the *then* day, which has now been some years yester-
 day: she assured me that the thing was common in London;
 and as her own thousands and blooming looks, and rich simplicity
 of array, put any suspicion in her own case out of the question,
 I confess I gave some credit to the allegation. If necessary,
 authorities might be cited, in which case I could quote both
 "drapery" and the wearers. Let us hope, however, that it is
 now obsolete.

Note 5, page 165, stanza lx.

'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle.

"*Divinæ particulam auræ.*"

DON JUAN.

CANTO XII.

I.

OF all the barbarous middle ages, that

Which is most barbarous is the middle age
Of man; it is—I really scarce know what;

But when we hover between fool and sage,
And don't know justly what we would be at—

A period something like a printed page,
Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair
Grows grizzled, and we are not what we were;—

II.

Too old for youth,—too young, at thirty-five,

To herd with boys, or hoard with good threescore,—
I wonder people should be left alive;

But since they are, that epoch is a bore:
Love lingers still, although 'twere late to wive;

And as for other love, the illusion's o'er;
And money, that most pure imagination,
Gleams only through the dawn of its creation.

III.

O Gold! Why call we misers miserable?

Theirs is the pleasure that can never pall;
Theirs is the best bower-anchor, the chain cable
Which holds fast other pleasures great and small.

Ye who but see the saving man at table,
And scorn his temperate board, as none at all,
And wonder how the wealthy can be sparing,
Know not what visions spring from each cheese-paring.

IV.

Love or lust makes man sick, and wine much sicker;
Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss;
But making money, slowly first, then quicker,
And adding still a little through each cross
(Which *will* come over things), beats love or liquor,
The gamester's counter, or the statesman's *dross*.
O Gold! I still prefer thee unto paper,
Which makes bank credit like a bark of vapour.

V.

Who hold the balance of the world? Who reign
O'er congress, whether royalist or liberal?
Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain? [all.)
(That make old Europe's journals squeak and gibber
Who keep the world, both old and new, in pain
Or pleasure? Who make politics run glibber all?
The shade of Buonaparte's noble daring?—
Jew Rothschild, and his fellow-christian, Baring.

VI.

Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,
Are the true lords of Europe. Every loan
Is not a merely speculative hit,
But seats a nation or upsets a throne.
Republics also get involved a bit;
Columbia's stock hath holders not unknown
On 'Change; and even thy silver soil, Peru,
Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

VII.

Why call the miser miserable? as
I said before: the frugal life is his,
Which in a saint or cynic ever was
The theme of praise: a hermit would not miss
Canonization for the self-same cause,
And wherefore blame gaunt wealth's austerities?
Because, you'll say, nought calls for such a trial;—
Then there's more merit in his self-denial.

VIII.

He is your only poet;—passion, pure
And sparkling on from heap to heap, displays,
Possess'd, the ore, of which *mere hopes* allure
Nations athwart the deep: the golden rays
Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure;
On him the diamond pours its brilliant blaze;
While the mild emerald's beam shades down the dies
Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

IX.

The lands on either side are his: the ship
From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay, unloads
For him the fragrant produce of each trip;
Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the roads,
And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip;
His very cellars might be kings' abodes;
While he, despising every sensual call,
Commands—the intellectual lord of all.

X.

Perhaps he hath great projects in his mind,
To build a college, or to found a race,
A hospital, a church,—and leave behind
Some dome surmounted by his meagre face:
Perhaps he fain would liberate mankind
Even with the very ore which makes them base;
Perhaps he would be wealthiest of his nation,
Or revel in the joys of calculation.

XI.

But whether all, or each, or none of these
May be the hoarder's principle of action,
The fool will call such mania a disease:—
What is his *own*? Go—look at each transaction,
Wars, revels, loves—do these bring men more ease
Than the mere plodding through each “vulgar frac-
Or do they benefit mankind? Lean miser! [tion?”
Let spendthrifts' heirs inquire of yours—who's wiser?

XII.

How beauteous are rouleaus! how charming chests
Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins
(Not of old victors, all whose heads and crests
Weigh not the thin ore where their visage shines,
But) of fine unclipt gold, where dully rests
Some likeness, which the glittering cirque confines,
Of modern, reigning, sterling, stupid stamp:—
Yes! ready money *is* Aladdin's lamp.

XIII.

"Love rules the camp, the court, the grove,"—"for Love
Is Heaven, and Heaven is Love:"—so sings the bard;
Which it were rather difficult to prove,
(A thing with poetry in general hard).
Perhaps there may be something in "the grove,"
At least it rhymes to "Love:" but I'm prepared
To doubt (no less than landlords of their rental)
If "courts" and "camps" be quite so sentimental.

XIV.

But if Love don't, *Cash* does, and Cash alone:
Cash rules the grove, and fells it too besides;
Without cash, camps were thin, and courts were none;
Without cash, Malthus tells you—"take no brides."
So Cash rules Love the ruler, on his own
High ground, as virgin Cynthia sways the tides:
And as for "Heaven being Love," why not say honey
Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 'tis Matrimony.

XV.

Is not all love prohibited whatever,
Excepting marriage? which is love, no doubt,
After a sort; but somehow people never
With the same thought the two words have help'd out:
Love may exist *with* marriage, and *should* ever,
And marriage also may exist without;
But love *sans* bans is both a sin and shame,
And ought to go by quite another name.

XVI.

Now if the "court," and "camp," and "grove," be not
Recruited all with constant married men,
Who never coveted their neighbour's lot,
I say *that* line's a lapsus of the pen;—
Strange too in my "buon camerado" Scott,
So celebrated for his morals, when
My Jeffrey held him up as an example
To me;—of which these morals are a sample.

XVII.

Well, if I don't succeed, I *have* succeeded,
And that's enough; succeeded in my youth,
The only time when much success is needed:
And my success produced what I in sooth
Cared most about; it need not now be pleaded—
Whate'er it was, 'twas mine; I've paid, in truth,
Of late, the penalty of such success,
But have not learn'd to wish it any less.

XVIII.

That suit in Chancery,—which some persons plead
In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,
In the faith of their procreative creed,
Baptize posterity, or future clay,—
To me seems but a dubious kind of reed
To lean on for support in any way;
Since odds are that posterity will know
No more of them, than they of her, I trow.

XIX.

Why, I'm posterity—and so are you;
And whom do we remember? Not a hundred.
Were every memory written down all true,
Thetenth or twentieth name would be but blunder'd;
Even Plutarch's Lives have but pick'd out a few,
And 'gainst those few your annalists have thunder'd;
And Mitford in the nineteenth century
Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie.⁽¹⁾

XX.

Good people all, of every degree,
Ye gentle readers and ungentle writers,
In this twelfth Canto 'tis my wish to be
As serious as if I had for inditers
Malthus and Wilberforce:—the last set free
The Negroes, and is worth a million fighters;
While Wellington has but enslaved the Whites,
And Malthus does the thing 'gainst which he writes.

XXI.

I'm serious—so are all men upon paper;
And why should I not form my speculation,
And hold up to the sun my little taper?

Mankind just now seem wrapt in meditation
On constitutions and steam-boats of vapour;

While sages write against all procreation,
Unless a man can calculate his means
Of feeding brats the moment his wife weans.

XXII.

That's noble! That's romantic! For my part,

I think that "Philo-genitiveness" is—
(Now here's a word quite after my own heart,
Though there's a shorter a good deal than this,
If that politeness set it not apart;

But I'm resolved to say nought that's amiss)—
I say, methinks that "Philo-genitiveness"
Might meet from men a little more forgiveness.

XXIII.

And now to business.—O my gentle Juan!

Thou art in London—in that pleasant place
Where every kind of mischief's daily brewing,
Which can await warm youth in its wild race.

'Tis true, that thy career is not a new one;

Thou art no novice in the headlong chase
Of early life; but this is a new land,
Which foreigners can never understand.

XXIV.

What with a small diversity of climate,
Of hot or cold, mercurial or sedate,
I could send forth my mandate like a primate
Upon the rest of Europe's social state;
But thou art the most difficult to rhyme at,
Great Britain, which the Muse may penetrate.
All countries have their "Lions," but in thee
There is but one superb menagerie.

XXV.

But I am sick of politics. Begin,
"Paulo Majora." Juan, undecided
Amongst the paths of being "taken in,"
Above the ice had like a skaiter glided:
When tired of play, he flirted without sin
With some of those fair creatures who have prided
Themselves on innocent tantalization,
And hate all vice except its reputation.

XXVI.

But these are few, and in the end they make
Some devilish escapade or stir, which shows
That even the purest people may mistake
Their way through virtue's primrose paths of snows;
And then men stare, as if a new ass spake
To Balaam, and from tongue to ear o'erflows
Quicksilver small talk, ending (if you note it)
With the kind world's amen—"Who would have
thought it?"

XXVII.

The little Leila, with her orient eyes,
And taciturn Asiatic disposition
(Which saw all western things with small surprise,
To the surprise of people of condition,
Who think that novelties are butterflies
To be pursued as food for inanition),
Her charming figure and romantic history
Became a kind of fashionable mystery.

XXVIII.

The women much divided—as is usual
Amongst the sex in little things or great.
Think not, fair creatures, that I mean to abuse you all—
I have always liked you better than I state:
Since I've grown moral, still I must accuse you all
Of being apt to talk at a great rate;
And now there was a general sensation
Amongst you, about Leila's education.

XXIX.

In one point only were you settled—and
You had reason; 'twas that a young child of grace,
As beautiful as her own native land,
And far away, the last bud of her race,
Howe'er our friend Don Juan might command
Himself for five, four, three, or two years' space,
Would be much better taught beneath the eye
Of peeresses whose follies had run dry.

XXX.

So first there was a generous emulation,
And then there was a general competition
To undertake the orphan's education.

As Juan was a person of condition,
It had been an affront on this occasion
To talk of a subscription or petition;
But sixteen dowagers, ten unwed she sages,
Whose tale belongs to "Hallam's Middle Ages,"

XXXI.

And one or two sad, separate wives, without
A fruit to bloom upon their withering bough—
Begged to bring *up* the little girl, and "*out*,"—
For that's the phrase that settles all things now,
Meaning a virgin's first blush at a rout,
And all her points as thorough-bred to show:
And I assure you, that like virgin honey
Tastes their first season (mostly if they have money)

XXXII.

How all the needy honourable misters,
Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate dandy,
The watchful mothers, and the careful sisters,
(Who, by the by, when clever, are more handy
At making matches, where "'tis gold that glisters,"'
Than their *he* relatives) like flies o'er candy
Buzz round "*the Fortune*" with their busy battery,
To turn her head with waltzing and with flattery!

XXXIII.

Each aunt, each cousin, hath her speculation ;

Nay, married dames will now and then discover
Such pure disinterestedness of passion,

I've known them court an heiress for their lover.
"Tantæne!" Such the virtues of high station,

Even in the hopeful Isle, whose outlet's "Dover!"
While the poor rich wretch, object of these cares,
Has cause to wish her sire had had male heirs.

XXXIV.

Some are soon bagg'd, and some reject three dozen.

'Tis fine to see them scattering refusals
And wild dismay o'er every angry cousin

(Friends of the party), who begin accusals
Such as—"Unless Miss (Blank) meant to have chosen

Poor Frederick, why did she accord perusals
To his billets? *Why* waltz with him? Why, I pray,
Look *yes* last night, and yet say *no* to-day?

XXXV.

"Why?—Why?—Besides, Fred really was *attach'd*;

'Twas not her fortune—he has enough without:
The time will come she'll wish that she had snatch'd

So good an opportunity, no doubt:—
But the old marchioness some plan had hatch'd,

As I'll tell Aurea at to-morrow's rout:
And after all poor Frederick may do better—
Pray did you see her answer to his letter?"

XXXVI.

Smart uniforms and sparkling coronets

Are spurn'd in turn, until her turn arrives,
After male loss of time, and hearts, and bets

Upon the sweepstakes for substantial wives;
And when at last the pretty creature gets

Some gentleman, who fights, or writes, or drives,
It soothes the awkward squad of the rejected
To find how very badly she selected.

XXXVII.

For sometimes they accept some long pursuer,

Worn out with importunity; or fall
(But here perhaps the instances are fewer)

To the lot of him who scarce pursued at all.
A hazy widower turn'd of forty's sure⁽²⁾

(If 'tis not vain examples to recall)
To draw a high prize: now, howe'er he got her, I
See nought more strange in this than t'other lottery.

XXXVIII.

I, for my part—(one "modern instance" more,
"True, 'tis a pity—pity 'tis, 'tis true")

Was chosen from out an amatory score,

Albeit my years were less discreet than few;
But though I also had reform'd before

Those became one who soon were to be two,
I'll not gainsay the generous public's voice,
That the young lady made a monstrous choice.

XXXIX.

Oh, pardon my digression—or at least
Peruse! 'Tis always with a moral end
That I dissert, like grace before a feast:
For like an aged aunt, or tiresome friend,
A rigid guardian, or a zealous priest,
My Muse by exhortation means to mend
All people, at all times, and in most places,
Which puts my Pegasus to these grave paces.

XL.

But now I'm going to be immoral; now
I mean to show things really as they are,
Not as they ought to be: for I avow,
That till we see what's what in fact, we're far
From much improvement with that virtuous plough
Which skims the surface, leaving scarce a scar
Upon the black loam long manured by Vice,
Only to keep its corn at the old price.

XLI.

But first of little Leila we'll dispose;
For like a day-dawn she was young and pure,
Or like the old comparison of snows,
Which are more pure than pleasant to be sure.
Like many people every body knows,
Don Juan was delighted to secure
A goodly guardian for his infant charge,
Who might not profit much by being at large.

XLII.

Besides, he had found out he was no tutor
(I wish that others would find out the same);
And rather wish'd in such things to stand neuter,
For silly wards will bring their guardians blame:
So when he saw each ancient dame a suitor
To make his little wild Asiatic tame,
Consulting "the Society for Vice
Suppression," Lady Pinchbeck was his choice.

XLIII.

Olden she was—but had been very young;
Virtuous she was—and had been, I believe;
Although the world has such an evil tongue
That—but my chaster ear will not receive
An echo of a syllable that's wrong:
In fact there's nothing makes me so much grieve
As that abominable tittle-tattle,
Which is the cud eschew'd by human cattle.

XLIV.

Moreover I've remark'd (and I was once
A slight observer in a modest way),
And so may every one except a dunce,
That ladies in their youth a little gay,
Besides their knowledge of the world, and sense
Of the sad consequence of going astray,
Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe
Which the mere passionless can never know.

XLV.

While the harsh prude indemnifies her virtue
By railing at the unknown and envied passion,
Seeking far less to save you than to hurt you,
Or, what's still worse, to put you out of fashion,—
The kinder veteran with calm words will court you,
Entreating you to pause before you dash on;
Expounding and illustrating the riddle
Of epic Love's beginning, end, and middle.

XLVI.

Now whether it be thus, or that they are stricter,
As better knowing why they should be so,
I think you'll find from many a family picture,
That daughters of such mothers as may know
The world by experience rather than by lecture,
Turn out much better for the Smithfield Show
Of vestals brought into the marriage mart,
Than those bred up by prudes without a heart.

XLVII.

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talk'd about—
As who has not, if female, young, and pretty?
But now no more the ghost of Scandal stalk'd about;
She merely was deem'd amiable and witty,
And several of her best bon-mots were hawk'd about:
Then she was given to charity and pity,
And pass'd (at least the latter years of life)
For being a most exemplary wife.

XLVIII.

High in high circles, gentle in her own,
She was the mild reprovcr of the young
Whenever—which means every day—they'd shown
An awkward inclination to go wrong.
The quantity of good she did's unknown,
Or at the least would lengthen out my song:
In brief, the little orphan of the East
Had raised an interest in her, which increased.

XLIX.

Juan too was a sort of favourite with her,
Because she thought him a good heart at bottom,
A little spoil'd, but not so altogether;
Which was a wonder, if you think who got him,
And how he had been toss'd, he scarce knew whither:
Though this might ruin others, it did *not* him,
At least entirely—for he had seen too many
Changes in youth, to be surprised at any.

L.

And these vicissitudes tell best in youth;
For when they happen at a riper age,
People are apt to blame the Fates, forsooth,
And wonder Providence is not more sage.
Adversity is the first path to truth:
He who hath proved war, storm, or woman's rage,
Whether his winters be eighteen or eighty,
Hath won the experience which is deem'd so weighty.

LI.

How far it profits is another matter.—

Our hero gladly saw his little charge
Safe with a lady, whose last grown-up daughter
Being long married, and thus set at large,
Had left all the accomplishments she taught her
To be transmitted, like the Lord Mayor's barge,
To the next comer; or—as it will tell
More Muse-like—like Cytherea's shell.

LII.

I call such things transmission; for there is
A floating balance of accomplishment
Which forms a pedigree from Miss to Miss,
According as their minds or backs are bent.
Some waltz; some draw; some fathom the abyss
Of metaphysics; others are content
With music; the most moderate shine as wits;
While others have a genius turn'd for fits.

LIII.

But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords,
Theology, fine arts, or finer stays
May be the baits for gentlemen or lords
With regular descent, in these our days,
The last year to the new transfers its hoards;
New vestals claim men's eyes with the same praise
Of "elegant" *et cetera*, in fresh batches—
All matchless creatures, and yet bent on matches.

LIV.

But now I will begin my poem. 'Tis
Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
That from the first of Cantos up to this
I've not begun what we have to go through.
These first twelve books are merely flourishes,
Preludios, trying just a string or two
Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;
And when so, you shall have the overture.

LV.

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin
About what's call'd success, or not succeeding:
Such thoughts are quite below the strain they have
'Tis a "great moral lesson" they are reading. [chosen;
I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
Cantos would do; but at Apollo's pleading,
If that my Pegasus should not be founder'd,
I think to canter gently through a hundred.

LVI.

Don Juan saw that microcosm on stilts,
Yclept the Great World; for it is the least,
Although the highest: but as swords have hilts
By which their power of mischief is increased,
When man in battle or in quarrel tilts,
Thus the low world, north, south, or west, or east,
Must still obey the high—which is their handle,
Their moon, their sun, their gas, their farthing candle.

LVII.

He had many friends who had many wives, and was

Well look'd upon by both, to that extent
Of friendship which you may accept or pass,

It does nor good nor harm; being merely meant
To keep the wheels going of the higher class,

And draw them nightly when a ticket's sent:
And what with masquerades, and fêtes, and balls,
For the first season such a life scarce palls.

LVIII.

A young unmarried man, with a good name

And fortune, has an awkward part to play;
For good society is but a game,

"The royal game of Goose," as I may say,
Where every body has some separate aim,

An end to answer, or a plan to lay—
The single ladies wishing to be double,
The married ones to save the virgins trouble.

LIX.

I don't mean this as general, but particular

Examples may be found of such pursuits:
Though several also keep their perpendicular

Like poplars, with good principles for roots;
Yet many have a method more *reticular*—

"Fishers for men," like sirens with soft lutes:
For talk six times with the same single lady,
And you may get the wedding dresses ready.

LX.

Perhaps you'll have a letter from the mother,
To say her daughter's feelings are trepann'd;
Perhaps you'll have a visit from the brother,
All strut, and stays, and whiskers, to demand
What "your intentions are?"—One way or other
It seems the virgin's heart expects your hand;
And between pity for her case and yours,
You'll add to Matrimony's list of cures.

LXI.

I've known a dozen weddings made even *thus*,
And some of them high names: I have also known
Young men who—though they hated to discuss
Pretensions which they never dream'd to have
Yet neither frighten'd by a female fuss, [shown—
Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
And lived, as did the broken-hearted fair,
In happier plight than if they form'd a pair.

LXII.

There's also nightly, to the uninitiated,
A peril—not indeed like love or marriage,
But not the less for this to be depreciated:
It is—I meant and mean not to disparage
The show of virtue even in the vitiated—
It adds an outward grace unto their carriage—
But to denounce the amphibious sort of harlot,
"Couleur de rose," who's neither white nor scarlet.

LXIII.

Such is your cold coquette, who can't say "No,"

And won't say "Yes," and keeps you on and off-ing,
On a lee-shore, till it begins to blow—

Then sees your heart wreck'd, with an inward scoffing.
This works a world of sentimental woe,

And sends new Werters yearly to their coffin;
But yet is merely innocent flirtation,
Not quite adultery, but adulteration.

LXIV.

"Ye gods, I grow a talker!" Let us prate.

The next of perils, though I place it *sternest*,
Is when, without regard to "church or state,"

A wife makes or takes love in upright earnest.
Abroad, such things decide few women's fate—

(Such, early traveller! is the truth thou learnest)—
But in old England, when a young bride errs,
Poor thing! Eve's was a trifling case to hers.

LXV.

For 'tis a low, newspaper, humdrum, lawsuit

Country, where a young couple of the same ages
Can't form a friendship, but the world o'erawes it.

Then there's the vulgar trick of those d—d damages!
A verdict—grievous foe to those who cause it!—

Forms a sad climax to romantic homages;
Besides those soothing speeches of the pleaders,
And evidences which regale all readers.

LXVI.

But they who blunder thus are raw beginners;
A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
Has saved the fame of thousand splendid sinners,
The loveliest oligarchs of our gynocracy;
You may see such at all the balls and dinners,
Among the proudest of our aristocracy,
So gentle, charming, charitable, chaste—
And all by having *tact* as well as taste.

LXVII.

Juan, who did not stand in the predicament
Of a mere novice, had one safeguard more;
For he was sick——no, 'twas not the word *sick* I meant—
But he had seen so much good love before,
That he was not in heart so very weak;—I meant
But thus much, and no sneer against the shore
Of white cliffs, white necks, blue eyes, bluer stockings,
Tithes, taxes, duns, and doors with double knockings.

LXVIII.

But coming young from lands and scenes romantic,
Where lives, not lawsuits, must be risk'd for Passion,
And Passion's self must have a spice of frantic,
Into a country where 'tis half a fashion,
Seem'd to him half commercial, half pedantic,
Howe'er he might esteem this moral nation:
Besides (alas! his taste—forgive and pity!)
At first he did not think the women pretty.

LXIX.

I say at *first*—for he found out at *last*,
But by degrees, that they were fairer far
Than the more glowing dames whose lot is cast
Beneath the influence of the eastern star.
A further proof we should not judge in haste;
Yet inexperience could not be his bar
To taste:—the truth is, if men would confess,
That novelties *please* less than they *impress*.

LXX.

Though travell'd, I have never had the luck to
Trace up those shuffling negroes, Nile or Niger,
To that impracticable place Timbuctoo,
Where Geography finds no one to oblige her
With such a chart as may be safely stuck to—
For Europe ploughs in Afric like “bos piger:”
But if I *had been* at Timbuctoo, there
No doubt I should be told that black is fair.

LXXI.

It is. I will not swear that black is white;
But I suspect in fact that white is black,
And the whole matter rests upon eye-sight.
Ask a blind man, the best judge. You'll attack
Perhaps this new position—but I'm right;
Or if I'm wrong, I'll not be ta'en aback:—
He hath no morn nor night, but all is dark
Within; and what seest thou? A dubious spark.

LXXII.

But I'm relapsing into metaphysics,
That labyrinth, whose clue is of the same
Construction as your cures for hectic phthisics,
Those bright moths fluttering round a dying flame;
And this reflection brings me to plain physics,
And to the beauties of a foreign dame,
Compared with those of our pure pearls of price,
Those polar summers, *all* sun, and some ice.

LXXIII.

Or say they are like virtuous mermaids, whose
Beginnings are fair faces, ends mere fishes;—
Not that there's not a quantity of those
Who have a due respect for their own wishes.
Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows⁽³⁾
Are they, at bottom virtuous even when vicious:
They warm into a scrape, but keep of course,
As a reserve, a plunge into remorse.

LXXIV.

But this has nought to do with their outsides.
I said that Juan did not think them pretty
At the first blush; for a fair Briton hides
Half her attractions—probably from pity—
And rather calmly into the heart glides,
Than storms it as a foe would take a city;
But once there (if you doubt this, prithee try)
She keeps it for you like a true ally.

LXXV.

She cannot step as does an Arab barb,
Or Andalusian girl from mass returning,
Nor wear as gracefully as Gauls her garb,
Nor in her eye Ausonia's glance is burning;
Her voice, though sweet, is not so fit to warble
Those bravuras (which I still am learning
To like, though I have been seven years in Italy,
And have, or had, an ear that served me prettily);—

LXXVI.

She cannot do these things, nor one or two
Others, in that off-hand and dashing style
Which takes so much—to give the devil his due;
Nor is she quite so ready with her smile,
Nor settles all things in one interview,
(A thing approved as saving time and toil);—
But though the soil may give you time and trouble,
Well cultivated, it will render double.

LXXVII.

And if in fact she takes to a “grande passion,”
It is a very serious thing indeed:
Nine times in ten 'tis but caprice or fashion,
Coquetry, or a wish to take the lead,
The pride of a mere child with a new sash on,
Or wish to make a rival's bosom bleed:
But the tenth instance will be a tornado,
For there's no saying what they will or may do.

LXXVIII.

The reason's obvious: if there's an éclat,
They lose their caste at once, as do the Parias;
And when the delicacies of the law
Have fill'd their papers with their comments various,
Society, that china without flaw,
(The hypocrite!) will banish them like Marius,
To sit amidst the ruins of their guilt:
For Fame's a Carthage not so soon rebuilt.

LXXIX.

Perhaps this is as it should be;—it is
A comment on the Gospel's "Sin no more,
And be thy sins forgiven:"—but upon this
I leave the saints to settle their own score.
Abroad, though doubtless they do much amiss,
An erring woman finds an opener door
For her return to Virtue—as they call
That lady who should be at home to all.

LXXX.

For me, I leave the matter where I find it,
Knowing that such uneasy virtue leads
People some ten times less in fact to mind it,
And care but for discoveries and not deeds.
And as for chastity, you'll never bind it
By all the laws the strictest lawyer pleads,
But aggravate the crime you have not prevented,
By rendering desperate those who had else repented.

LXXXI.

But Juan was no casuist, nor had ponder'd
Upon the moral lessons of mankind:
Besides, he had not seen of several hundred
A lady altogether to his mind.
A little "blasé"—'tis not to be wonder'd
At, that his heart had got a tougher rind:
And though not vainer from his past success,
No doubt his sensibilities were less.

LXXXII.

He also had been busy seeing sights—
The Parliament and all the other houses;
Had sat beneath the gallery at nights,
To hear debates whose thunder *roused* (not *rouses*)
The world to gaze upon those northern lights⁽⁴⁾
Which flash'd as far as where the musk-bull browses;
He had also stood at times behind the throne—
But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham gone.

LXXXIII.

He saw, however, at the closing session,
That noble sight, when *really* free the nation,
A king in constitutional possession
Of such a throne as is the proudest station,
Though despots know it not—till the progression
Of freedom shall complete their education.
'Tis not mere splendour makes the show august
To eye or heart—it is the people's trust.

LXXXIV.

There too he saw (whate'er he may be now)
A Prince, the prince of princes at the time,
With fascination in his very bow,
And full of promise, as the spring of prime.
Though royalty was written on his brow,
He had *then* the grace too, rare in every clime,
Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,
A finish'd gentleman from top to toe.

LXXXV.

And Juan was received, as hath been said,
Into the best society: and there
Occurr'd what often happens, I'm afraid,
However disciplined and debonnaire:—
The talent and good humour he display'd,
Besides the mark'd distinction of his air,
Exposed him, as was natural, to temptation,
Even though himself avoided the occasion.

LXXXVI.

But what, and where, with whom, and when, and why,
Is not to be put hastily together;
And as my object is morality
(Whatever people say), I don't know whether
I'll leave a single reader's eyelid dry,
But harrow up his feelings till they wither,
And hew out a huge monument of pathos,
As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.⁽⁵⁾

LXXXVII.

Here the twelfth Canto of our introduction

Ends. When the body of the book's begun,
You'll find it of a different construction

From what some people say 'twill be when done:
The plan at present's simply in concoction.

I can't oblige you, reader, to read on;
That's your affair, not mine: a real spirit
Should neither court neglect, nor dread to bear it.

LXXXVIII.

And if my thunderbolt not always rattles,

Remember, reader! you have had before
The worst of tempests and the best of battles

That e'er were brew'd from elements or gore,
Besides the most sublime of—Heaven knows what else:

An usurer could scarce expect much more—
But my best canto, save one on astronomy,
Will turn upon "political economy."

LXXXIX.

That is your present theme for popularity:

Now that the public hedge hath scarce a stake,
It grows an act of patriotic charity,

To show the people the best way to break.

My plan (but I, if but for singularity,

Reserve it) will be very sure to take.

Meantime, read all the national debt-sinkers,

And tell me what you think of your great thinkers.

NOTES TO CANTO XII.

Note 1, page 185, stanza xix

*And Mitford in the nineteenth century
Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie.*

See Mitford's Greece. "*Græciæ Verax.*" His great pleasure consists in praising tyrants, abusing Plutarch, spelling oddly, and writing quaintly; and what is strange, after all, *his* is the best modern history of Greece in any language, and he is perhaps the best of all modern historians whatsoever. Having named his sins, it is but fair to state his virtues—learning, labour, research, wrath, and partiality. I call the latter virtues in a writer, because they make him write in earnest.

Note 2, page 191, stanza xxxvii.

*A hazy widower turn'd of forty's sure
To draw a high prize.*

This line may puzzle the commentators more than the present generation.

Note 3, page 203, stanza lxxiii.

Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows.

The Russians, as is well known, run out from their hot baths to plunge into the Neva; a pleasant practical antithesis, which it seems does them no harm.

Note 4, page 206, stanza lxxxii.

*To hear debates whose thunder roused (not rouses)
The world to gaze upon those northern lights
Which flash'd as far as where the musk-bull browses.*

For a description and print of this inhabitant of the polar region and native country of the Auroræ Boreales, see Parry's Voyage in search of a North-West Passage.

Note 5, page 207, stanza lxxxvi.

*And hew out a huge monument of pathos,
As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.*

A sculptor projected to hew Mount Athos into a statue of Alexander, with a city in one hand, and, I believe, a river in his pocket, with various other similar devices. But Alexander's gone, and Athos remains, I trust ere long to look over a nation of freemen.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XIII.

I.

I NOW mean to be serious;—it is time,
Since laughter now-a-days is deem'd too serious.
A jest at Vice by Virtue's call'd a crime,
And critically held as deleterious:
Besides, the sad's a source of the sublime,
Although when long a little apt to weary us;
And therefore shall my lay soar high and solemn,
As an old temple dwindled to a column.

II.

The Lady Adeline Amundeville
('Tis an old Norman name, and to be found
In pedigrees by those who wander still
Along the last fields of that Gothic ground)
Was high-born, wealthy by her father's will,
And beauteous, even where beauties most abound,
In Britain—which of course true patriots find
The goodliest soil of body and of mind.

III.

I'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;

I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt the best:

An eye's an eye, and whether black or blue,

Is no great matter, so 'tis in request,

'Tis nonsense to dispute about a hue—

The kindest may be taken as a test.

The fair sex should be always fair; and no man,

Till thirty, should perceive there's a plain woman.

IV.

And after that serene and somewhat dull

Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for days

More quiet, when our moon's no more at full,

We may presume to criticise or praise;

Because indifference begins to lull

Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's ways;

Also because the figure and the face

Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger place.

V.

I know that some would fain postpone this era,

Reluctant as all placemen to resign

Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,

For they have pass'd life's equinoctial line:

But then they have their claret and Madeira

To irrigate the dryness of decline;

And county meetings, and the parliament,

And debt, and what not, for their solace sent.

VI.

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, war, the taxes, and what's call'd the "Nation?"
The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied speculation?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucination?
Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

VII.

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, profess'd,
Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater!"—⁽¹⁾
The only truth that yet has been confest
Within these latest thousand years or later.
Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:—
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,
Much in the mode of Goëthe's Mephistopheles;

VIII.

But neither love nor hate in much excess;
Though 'twas not once so. If I sneer sometimes,
It is because I cannot well do less,
And now and then it also suits my rhymes.
I should be very willing to redress
Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,
Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

IX.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more sad,
Because it makes us smile: his hero's right,
And still pursues the right;—to curb the bad
His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight
His guerdon: 'tis his virtue makes him mad!
But his adventures form a sorry sight;—
A sorrier still is the great moral taught
By that real epic unto all who have thought.

X.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;
Opposing singly the united strong,
From foreign yoke to free the helpless native:—
Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,
Be for mere fancy's sport a theme creative,
A jest, a riddle, Fame through thick and thin sought!
And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote?

XI.

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
A single laugh demolish'd the right arm
Of his own country;—seldom since that day
Has Spain had heroes. While Romance could charm,
The world gave ground before her bright array;
And therefore have his volumes done such harm,
That all their glory, as a composition,
Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition.

XII.

I'm "at my old Lunes"—digression, and forget
The Lady Adeline Amundeville;
The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
Although she was not evil nor meant ill;
But Destiny and Passion spread the net
(Fate is a good excuse for our own will),
And caught them;—what do they *not* catch, methinks?
But I'm not Œdipus, and life's a Sphinx.

XIII.

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
To venture a solution: "Davus sum!"
And now I will proceed upon the pair.
Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's hum,
Was the Queen-Bee, the glass of all that's fair;
Whose charms made all men speak, and women dumb.
The last's a miracle, and such was reckon'd,
And since that time there has not been a second.

XIV.

Chaste was she, to detraction's desperation,
And wedded unto one she had loved well—
A man known in the councils of the nation,
Cool, and quite English, imperturbable,
Though apt to act with fire upon occasion,
Proud of himself and her: the world could tell
Nought against either, and both seem'd secure—
She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

XV.

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
Arising out of business, often brought
Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
Into close contact. Though reserved, nor caught
By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and patience,
And talent, on his haughty spirit wrought,
And form'd a basis of esteem, which ends
In making men what courtesy calls friends.

XVI.

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
Reserve and pride could make him, and full slow
In judging men—when once his judgment was
Determined, right or wrong, on friend or foe,
Had all the pertinacity pride has,
Which knows no ebb to its imperious flow,
And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided,
Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

XVII.

His friendships, therefore, and no less aversions,
Though oft well founded, which confirm'd but more
His prepossessions, like the laws of Persians
And Medes, would ne'er revoke what went before.
His feelings had not those strange fits, like tertians,
Of common likings, which make some deplore
What they should laugh at—the mere ague still
Of men's regard, the fever or the chill.

XVIII.

"'Tis not in mortals to command success:

But *do you more*, Sempronius—*don't* deserve it,"
And take my word, you won't have any less.

Be wary, watch the time, and always serve it;
Give gently way, when there's too great a press;

And for your conscience, only learn to nerve it,—
For like a racer, or a boxer training,
'Twill make, if proved, vast efforts without paining.

XIX.

Lord Henry also liked to be superior,

As most men do, the little or the great;
The very lowest find out an inferior,

At least they think so, to exert their state
Upon: for there are very few things wearier

Than solitary Pride's oppressive weight,
Which mortals generously would divide,
By bidding others carry while they ride.

XX.

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,

O'er Juan he could no distinction claim;
In years he had the advantage of time's sequel;

And, as he thought, in country much the same—
Because bold Britons have a tongue and free quill,

At which all modern nations vainly aim;
And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
So that few members kept the house up later.

XXI.

These were advantages: and then he thought—

It was his foible, but by no means sinister—
That few or none more than himself had caught
Court mysteries, having been himself a minister:
He liked to teach that which he had been taught,
And greatly shone whenever there had been a stir;
And reconciled all qualities which grace man,
Always a patriot, and sometimes a placeman.

XXII.

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity;
He almost honour'd him for his docility,
Because, though young, he acquiesced with suavity,
Or contradicted but with proud humility.
He knew the world, and would not see depravity
In faults which sometimes show the soil's fertility,
If that the weeds o'erlive not the first crop—
For then they are very difficult to stop.

XXIII.

And then he talk'd with him about Madrid,
Constantinople, and such distant places;
Where people always did as they were bid,
Or did what they should not with foreign graces.
Of coursers also spake they: Henry rid
Well, like most Englishmen, and loved the races;
And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
Could back a horse, as despots ride a Russian.

XXIV.

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs,
And diplomatic dinners, or at other—
For Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
As in freemasonry a higher brother.
Upon his talent Henry had no doubts;
His manner show'd him sprung from a high mother;
And all men like to show their hospitality
To him whose breeding matches with his quality.

XXV.

At Blank-Blank Square;—for we will break no squares
By naming streets: since men are so censorious,
And apt to sow an author's wheat with tares,
Reaping allusions private and inglorious,
Where none were dreamt of, unto love's affairs,
Which were, or are, or are to be notorious,
That therefore do I previously declare,
Lord Henry's mansion was in Blank-Blank Square.

XXVI.

Also there bin⁽²⁾ another pious reason
For making squares and streets anonymous;
Which is, that there is scarce a single season
Which doth not shake some very splendid house
With some slight heart-quake of domestic treason—
A topic scandal doth delight to rouse:
Such I might stumble over unawares,
Unless I knew the very chastest squares.

XXVII.

'Tis true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,
A place where peccadillos are unknown;
But I have motives, whether wise or silly,
For letting that pure sanctuary alone.
Therefore I name not square, street, place, until I
Find one where nothing naughty can be shown,
A vestal shrine of innocence of heart:
Such are ——but I have lost the London Chart.

XXVIII.

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank Square,
Was Juan a *recherché*, welcome guest,
As many other noble scions were;
And some who had but talent for their crest;
Or wealth, which is a passport every where;
Or even mere fashion, which indeed's the best
Recommendation; and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.

XXIX.

And since "there's safety in a multitude
Of counsellors," as Solomon has said,
Or some one for him, in some sage, grave mood;—
Indeed we see the daily proof display'd
In senates, at the bar, in wordy feud,
Where'er collective wisdom can parade,
Which is the only cause that we can guess
Of Britain's present wealth and happiness;—

XXX.

But as "there's safety" grafted in the number
"Of counsellors" for men,—thus for the sex
A large acquaintance lets not Virtue slumber;
Or should it shake, the choice will more perplex—
Variety itself will more encumber.
'Midst many rocks we guard more against wrecks;
And thus with women: howsoe'er it shocks some's
Self-love, there's safety in a crowd of coxcombs.

XXXI.

But Adeline had not the least occasion
For such a shield, which leaves but little merit
To virtue proper, or good education.
Her chief resource was in her own high spirit,
Which judg'd mankind at their due estimation;
And for coquetry, she disdain'd to wear it:
Secure of admiration, its impression
Was faint, as of an every day possession.

XXXII.

To all she was polite without parade;
To some she show'd attention of that kind
Which flatters, but is flattery convey'd
In such a sort as cannot leave behind
A trace unworthy either wife or maid;—
A gentle, genial courtesy of mind,
'To those who were, or pass'd for meritorious,
Just to console sad glory for being glorious;

XXXIII.

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
Upon the shades of those distinguish'd men,
Who were or are the puppet-shows of praise,
The praise of persecution. Gaze again
On the most favour'd; and amidst the blaze
Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-brow'd,
What can ye recognize?—a gilded cloud.

XXXIV.

There also was of course in Adeline
That calm patrician polish in the address,
Which ne'er can pass the equinoctial line
Of any thing which Nature would express:
Just as a mandarin finds nothing fine,—
At least his manner suffers not to guess
That any thing he views can greatly please.
Perhaps we have borrow'd this from the Chinese—

XXXV.

Perhaps from Horace: his "*Nil admirari*"
Was what he call'd the "Art of Happiness;"
An art on which the artists greatly vary,
And have not yet attain'd to much success.
However, 'tis expedient to be wary:
Indifference certes don't produce distress;
And rash enthusiasm in good society
Were nothing but a moral inebriety.

XXXVI.

But Adeline was not indifferent: for

(*Now* for a common-place!) beneath the snow,
As a volcano holds the lava more

Within—*et cætera*. Shall I go on?—No!
I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor,

So let the often-used volcano go.
Poor thing! How frequently, by me and others,
It hath been stirr'd up till its smoke quite smothers!

XXXVII.

I'll have another figure in a trice:—

What say you to a bottle of champagne?
Frozen into a very vinous ice,

Which leaves few drops of that immortal rain,
Yet in the very centre, past all price,

About a liquid glass-full will remain;
And this is stronger than the strongest grape
Could e'er express in its expanded shape:

XXXVIII.

'Tis the whole spirit brought to a quintessence;

And thus the chilliest aspects may concentrate
A hidden nectar under a cold presence.

And such are many—though I only meant her
From whom I now deduce these moral lessons,

On which the Muse has always sought to enter.
And your cold people are beyond all price,
When once you have broken their confounded ice.

XXXIX.

But after all they are a North-West Passage
Unto the glowing India of the soul;
And as the good ships sent upon that message
Have not exactly ascertain'd the Pole
(Though Parry's efforts look a lucky presage),
Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal;
For if the Pole's not open, but all frost
(A chance still), 'tis a voyage or vessel lost.

XL.

And young beginners may as well commence
With quiet cruising o'er the ocean woman;
While those who are not beginners should have sense
Enough to make for port, ere time shall summon
With his gray signal-flag; and the past tense,
The dreary "*Fuimus*" of all things human,
Must be declined, while life's thin thread's spun out
Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout.

XLI.

But Heaven must be diverted; its diversion
Is sometimes truculent—but never mind:
The world upon the whole is worth the assertion
(If but for comfort) that all things are kind:
And that same devilish doctrine of the Persian,
Of the two principles, but leaves behind
As many doubts as any other doctrine
Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoked her in.

XLII.

The English winter—ending in July,
To recommence in August—now was done.
'Tis the postilion's paradise: wheels fly;
On roads, east, south, north, west, there is a run.
But for post-horses who finds sympathy?
Man's pity's for himself, or for his son,
Always premising that said son at college
Has not contracted much more debt than knowledge.

XLIII.

The London winter's ended in July—
Sometimes a little later. I don't err
In this: whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders, here I must aver
My Muse a glass of weatherology;
For parliament is our barometer:
Let radicals its other acts attack,
Its sessions form our only almanack.

XLIV.

When its quicksilver's down at zero,—lo!
Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage, equipage!
Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to Soho,
And happiest they who horses can engage;
The turnpikes glow with dust; and Rotten Row
Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright age;
And tradesmen, with long bills and longer faces,
Sigh—as the postboys fasten on the traces.

XLV.

They and their bills, "Arcadians both,"⁽³⁾ are left

To the Greek kalends of another session.

Alas! to them of ready cash bereft,

What hope remains? Of *hope* the full possession,
Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,

At a long date—till they can get a fresh one—
Hawk'd about at a discount, small or large;
Also the solace of an overcharge.

XLVI.

But these are trifles. Downward flies my lord

Nodding beside my lady in his carriage.

Away! away! "Fresh horses!" are the word,

And changed as quickly as hearts after marriage;
The obsequious landlord hath the change restored;

The postboys have no reason to disparage
Their fee; but ere the water'd wheels may hiss hence,
The ostler pleads for a reminiscence.

XLVII.

'Tis granted; and the valet mounts the dickey—

That gentleman of lords and gentlemen;

Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,

Trick'd out, but modest more than poet's pen
Can paint, "*Così viaggino i Ricchi!*"

(Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
If but to show I've travell'd; and what's travel,
Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

XLVIII.

The London winter and the country summer
Were well nigh over. 'Tis perhaps a pity,
When Nature wears the gown that doth become her,
To lose those best months in a sweaty city,
And wait until the nightingale grows dumber,
Listening debates not very wise or witty,
Ere patriots their true *country* can remember;—
But there's no shooting (save grouse) till September.

XLIX.

I've done with my tirade. The world was gone;
The twice two thousand, for whom earth was made,
Were vanish'd to be what they call alone—
That is, with thirty servants for parade;
As many guests, or more; before whom groan
As many covers, duly, daily laid.
Let none accuse old England's hospitality—
Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

L.

Lord Henry and the Lady Adeline
Departed like the rest of their compeers,
The peerage, to a mansion very fine;
The Gothic Babel of a thousand years.
None than themselves could boast a longer line, [steers;
Where time through heroes and through beauties
And oaks as olden as their pedigree
Told of their sires, a tomb in every tree.

LI.

A paragraph in every paper told
Of their departure: such is modern fame:
'Tis pity that it takes no farther hold
Than an advertisement, or much the same;
When ere the ink be dry, the sound grows cold.
The Morning Post was foremost to proclaim—
“Departure, for his country seat, to-day,
Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

LII.

“We understand the splendid host intends
To entertain, this autumn, a select
And numerous party of his noble friends; [rect,
Midst whom we have heard, from sources quite cor-
The Duke of D— the shooting season spends,
With many more by rank and fashion deck'd;
Also a foreigner of high condition,
The envoy of the secret Russian mission.”

LIII.

And thus we see—who doubts the Morning Post?
(Whose articles are like the “Thirty-nine,”
Which those most swear to who believe them most)—
Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordain'd to shine,
Deck'd by the rays reflected from his host,
With those who, Pope says, “greatly daring dine.”
'Tis odd, but true,—last war the News abounded
More with these dinners than the kill'd or wounded;—

LIV.

As thus: "On Thursday there was a grand dinner;
Present, Lords A. B. C."—Earls, dukes, by name
Announced with no less pomp than victory's winner:
Then underneath, and in the very same
Column: date, "Falmouth. There has lately been here
The Slap-dash regiment, so well known to fame;
Whose loss in the late action we regret:
The vacancies are fill'd up—see Gazette."

LV.

To Norman Abbey whirl'd the noble pair,—
An old, old monastery once, and now
Still older mansion, of a rich and rare
Mix'd Gothic, such as artists all allow
Few specimens yet left us can compare
Withal: it lies perhaps a little low,
Because the monks preferr'd a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.

LVI.

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunder-stroke;
And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters—as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a bird.

LVII.

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around: the wild fowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed:
The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood
With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

LVIII.

Its outlet dash'd into a deep cascade,
Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding,
Its shriller echoes—like an infant made
Quiet—sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet; and thus allay'd,
Pursued its course, now gleaming, and now hiding
Its windings through the woods; now clear, now blue,
According as the skies their shadows threw.

LIX.

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand arch, which once screen'd many an aisle.
These last had disappear'd—a loss to art:
The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable arch.

LX.

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone;
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
But in the war which struck Charles from his throne,
When each house was a fortalice—as tell
The annals of full many a line undone,—
The gallant cavaliers, who fought in vain
For those who knew not to resign or reign. ||

LXI.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd,
The Virgin Mother of the God-born Child,
With her Son in her bless'd arms, look'd round,
Spared by some chance when all beside was spoil'd;
She made the earth below seem holy ground.
This may be superstition, weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.

LXII.

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
Through which the deepen'd glories once could enter,
Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,
Now yawns all desolate: now loud, now fainter,
The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like fire.

LXIII.

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
The wind is winged from one point of heaven,
There moans a strange unearthly sound, which then
Is musical—a dying accent driven
Through the huge arch, which soars and sinks again.
Some deem it but the distant echo given
Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
And harmonized by the old choral wall:

LXIV.

Others, that some original shape, or form
Shaped by decay perchance, hath given the power
(Though less than that of Memnon's statue, warm
In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fix'd hour)
To this gray ruin, with a voice to charm.
Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower:
The cause I know not, nor can solve; but such
The fact:—I've heard it,—once perhaps too much.

LXV.

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd,
Symmetrical, but deck'd with carvings quaint—
Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a saint: [made,
The spring gush'd through grim mouths, of granite
And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

LXVI.

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserved : the cloisters still were stable,
The cells too, and refectory, I ween :
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene ;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

LXVII.

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, join'd
By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur ; but when combined,
Form'd a whole which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts.
We gaze upon a giant for his stature,
Nor judge at first if all be true to nature.

LXVIII.

Steel barons, molten the next generation
To silken rows of gay and garter'd earls,
Glanced from the walls in goodly preservation :
And Lady Marys blooming into girls,
With fair long locks, had also kept their station :
And countesses mature in robes and pearls :
Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire them freely.

LXIX.

Judges in very formidable ermine

Were there, with brows that did not much invite
The accused to think their lordships would determine

His cause by leaning much from might to right:
Bishops, who had not left a single sermon:

Attorneys-general, awful to the sight,
As hinting more (unless our judgments warp us)
Of the "Star Chamber" than of "Habeas Corpus."

LXX.

Generals, some all in armour, of the old

And iron time, ere lead had ta'en the lead;
Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold,

Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed:
Lordlings, with staves of white or keys of gold:

Nimrods, whose canvas scarce contain'd the steed;
And here and there some stern high patriot stood,
Who could not get the place for which he sued.

LXXI.

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,

Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,

Or wilder group of savage Salvatore's:⁽⁴⁾
Here danced Albano's boys, and here the sea shone

In Vernet's ocean lights; and there the stories
Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted
His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.

LXXII.

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Loraine;

There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain

Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic anchorite:—
But lo! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,

Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight:
His bell-mouth'd goblet makes me feel quite Danish ⁽⁵⁾
Or Dutch with thirst—What ho! a flask of Rhenish.

LXXIII.

O reader! if that thou canst read,—and know,

'Tis not enough to spell, or even to read,
To constitute a reader; there must go

Virtues of which both you and I have need.
Firstly, begin with the beginning—(though

That clause is hard); and secondly, proceed;
Thirdly, commence not with the end—or, sinning
In this sort, end at least with the beginning.

LXXIV.

But, reader, thou hast patient been of late,

While I, without remorse of rhyme, or fear,
Have built and laid out ground at such a rate,

Dan Phœbus takes me for an auctioneer.
That poets were so from their earliest date,

By Homer's "Catalogue of ships" is clear;
But a mere modern must be moderate—
I spare you then the furniture and plate.

LXXV.

The mellow autumn came, and with it came
The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
The corn is cut, the manor full of game;
The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket:—lynx-like is his aim,
Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.
Ah nutbrown partridges! Ah brilliant pheasants!
And ah, ye poachers!—'Tis no sport for peasants.

LXXVI.

An English autumn, though it hath no vines,
Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
The paths, o'er which the far festoon entwines
The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
The claret light, and the Madeira strong.
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her,
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

LXXVII.

Then, if she hath not that serene decline
Which makes the southern autumn's day appear
As if 'twould to a second spring resign
The season, rather than to winter drear,—
Of in-door comforts still she hath a mine,—
The sea-coal fires, the earliest of the year;
Without doors too she may compete in mellow,
As what is lost in green is gain'd in yellow.

LXXVIII.

And for the effeminate *villeggiatura*— [chase,
Rife with more horns than hounds—she hath the
So animated that it might allure a
Saint from his beads to join the jocund race;
Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura,⁽⁶⁾
And wear the Melton jacket for a space:
If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
Preserve of bores, who ought to be made game.

LXXIX.

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
Consisted of—we give the sex the pas—
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke; the Countess Crabby;
The ladies Scilly, Busey;—Miss Eclat,
Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O'Tabby,
And Mrs. Rabbi, the rich banker's squaw;
Also the honourable Mrs. Sleep,
Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black sheep:

LXXX.

With other Countesses of Blank—but rank;
At once the “lie” and the “élite” of crowds;
Who pass like water filter'd in a tank,
All purged and pious from their native clouds;
Or paper turn'd to money by the Bank:
No matter how or why, the passport shrouds
The “passée” and the past; for good society
Is no less famed for tolerance than piety,—

LXXXI.

That is, up to a certain point; which point
Forms the most difficult in punctuation.
Appearances appear to form the joint
On which it hinges in a higher station;
And so that no explosion cry "Aroint
Thee, witch!" or each Medea has her Jason;
Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)
"*Omne tulit punctum, quæ miscuit utile dulci.*"

LXXXII.

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,
Which hath a little leaning to a lottery.
I've seen a virtuous woman put down quite
By the mere combination of a coterie;
Also a so-so matron boldly fight
Her way back to the world by dint of plottery,
And shine the very *Siria* of the spheres,
Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

LXXXIII.

I have seen more than I'll say:—but we will see
How our *villeggiatura* will get on.
The party might consist of thirty-three
Of highest caste—the Brahmins of the ton.
I have named a few, not foremost in degree,
But ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may run.
By way of sprinkling, scatter'd amongst these
There also were some Irish absentees.

LXXXIV.

There was Parolles too, the legal bully,
Who limits all his battles to the bar
And senate: when invited elsewhere, truly,
He shows more appetite for words than war.
There was the young bard Rackrhyme, who had newly
Come out and glimmer'd as a six weeks' star.
There was Lord Pyrrho too, the great freethinker;
And Sir John Pottledeep, the mighty drinker.

LXXXV.

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a—duke,
“Ay, every inch a” duke; there were twelve peers
Like Charlemagne's—and all such peers in look
And intellect, that neither eyes nor ears
For commoners had ever them mistook.
There were the six Miss Rawbolds—pretty dears!
All song and sentiment; whose hearts were set
Less on a convent than a coronet.

LXXXVI.

There were four Honourable Misters, whose
Honour was more before their names than after;
There was the preux Chevalier de la Ruse,
Whom France and Fortune lately deign'd to waft here,
Whose chiefly harmless talent was to amuse;
But the clubs found it rather serious laughter,
Because—such was his magic power to please—
The dice seem'd charm'd too with his repartees.

LXXXVII.

There was Dick Dubious, the metaphysician,
Who loved philosophy and a good dinner;
Angle, the soi-disant mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,
Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner;
And Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet,
Good at all things, but better at a bet.

LXXXVIII.

There was Jack Jargon, the gigantic guardsman;
And General Fireface, famous in the field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he kill'd.
There was the waggish Welsh Judge, Jefferies Hards-
In his grave office so completely skill'd, [man,
That when a culprit came for condemnation,
He had his judge's joke for consolation.

LXXXIX.

Good company's a chess-board—there are kings,
Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns; the world's
a game;
Save that the puppets pull at their own strings,
Methinks gay Punch hath something of the same.
My Muse, the butterfly hath but her wings,
Not stings, and flits through ether without aim,
Alighting rarely:—were she but a hornet,
Perhaps there might be vices which would mourn it.

XC.

I had forgotten—but must not forget—

An orator, the latest of the session,
Who had deliver'd well a very set

Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression
Upon debate: the papers echoed yet

With his début, which made a strong impression,
And rank'd with what is every day display'd—
“The best first speech that ever yet was made.”

XCI.

Proud of his “Hear him!” proud too of his vote

And lost virginity of oratory,
Proud of his learning (just enough to quote),

He revell'd in his Ciceronian glory:

With memory excellent to get by rote,

With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,
Graced with some merit, and with more effrontery,
“His country's pride,” he came down to the country.

XCII.

There also were two wits by acclamation,

Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,
Both lawyers and both men of education;

But Strongbow's wit was of more polish'd breed:
Longbow was rich in an imagination

As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
But sometimes stumbling over a potato,— [Cato.
While Strongbow's best things might have come from

XCIII.

Strongbow was like a new-tuned harpsichord;

But Longbow wild as an Æolian harp,
With which the winds of heaven can claim accord,
And make a music, whether flat or sharp.

Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word:

At Longbow's phrases you might sometimes carp:
Both wits—one born so, and the other bred,
This by his heart—his rival by his head.

XCIV.

If all these seem an heterogeneous mass

To be assembled at a country seat,
Yet think, a specimen of every class
Is better than a humdrum tête-à-tête.

The days of Comedy are gone, alas!

When Congreve's fool could vie with Moliere's *bête*:
Society is smooth'd to that excess,
That manners hardly differ more than dress.

XCV.

Our ridicules are kept in the back-ground—

Ridiculous enough, but also dull;
Professions too are no more to be found
Professional; and there is nought to cull
Of folly's fruit: for though your fools abound,
They're barren, and not worth the pains to pull.
Society is now one polish'd horde,
Form'd of two mighty tribes, the *Bores* and *Bored*.

XCVI.

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners, gleaning
The scanty but right-well thresh'd ears of truth;
And, gentle reader! when you gather meaning,
You may be Boaz, and I—modest Ruth.
Farther I'd quote, but Scripture intervening
Forbids. A great impression in my youth
Was made by Mrs. Adams, where she cries
“That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies.” (7)

XCVII.

But what we can we glean in this vile age
Of chaff, although our gleanings be not grist.
I must not quite omit the talking sage,
Kit-Cat, the famous conversationist,
Who, in his common-place-book, had a page
Prepared each morn for evenings. “List, oh list!” —
“Alas, poor ghost!”—What unexpected woes
Await those who have studied their bons-mots!

XCVIII.

Firstly, they must allure the conversation
By many windings to their clever clinch;
And secondly, must let slip no occasion,
Nor *bate* (abate) their hearers of an *inch*,
But take an ell—and make a great sensation,
If possible; and thirdly, never flinch
When some smart talker puts them to the test,
But seize the last word, which no doubt's the best

XCIX.

Lord Henry and his lady were the hosts;
The party we have touch'd on were the guests!
Their table was a board to tempt even ghosts
To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts.
I will not dwell upon ragoûts or roasts,
Albeit all human history attests,
That happiness for man—the hungry sinner!—
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.

C.

Witness the lands which “flow'd with milk and honey,”
Held out unto the hungry Israelites:
To this we have added since, the love of money,
The only sort of pleasure which requites.
Youth fades, and leaves our days no longer sunny;
We tire of mistresses and parasites;
But oh, ambrosial cash! Ah! who would lose thee?
When we no more can use, or even abuse thee!

CI.

The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,
Or hunt: the young, because they liked the sport—
The first thing boys like, after play and fruit;
The middle-aged, to make the day more short;
For *ennui* is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language:—we retort
The fact for words, and let the French translate
That awful yawn which sleep can not abate.

CII.

The elderly walk'd through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticised the pictures,
Or saunter'd through the gardens piteously,
And made upon the hot-house several strictures,
Or rode a nag which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their lectures,
Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six.

CIII.

But none were "géné:" the great hour of union
Was rung by dinner's knell; till then all were
Masters of their own time—or in communion,
Or solitary, as they chose to bear
The hours, which how to pass is but to few known.
Each rose up at his own, and had to spare
What time he chose for dress, and broke his fast
When, where, and how he chose for that repast.

CIV.

The ladies—some rouged, some a little pale—
Met the morn as they might. If fine, they rode,
Or walk'd; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from abroad;
Discuss'd the fashion which might next prevail,
And settled bonnets by the newest code,
Or cramm'd twelve sheets into one little letter,
To make each correspondent a new debtor.

CV.

For some had absent lovers, all had friends.

The earth has nothing like a she epistle,
And hardly heaven—because it never ends.

I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which, like a creed, ne'er says all it intends,
But full of cunning as Ulysses' whistle,
When he allured poor Dolon:—you had better
Take care what you reply to such a letter.

CVI.

Then there were billiards; cards too, but *no* dice;—

Save in the clubs no man of honour plays;—
Boats when 'twas water, skaiting when 'twas ice,
And the hard frost destroy'd the scenting days:
And angling too, that solitary vice,

Whatever Isaac Walton sings or says:
The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.⁽⁸⁾

CVII.

With evening came the banquet and the wine;

The conversazione; the duet,
Attuned by voices more or less divine
(My heart or head aches with the memory yet).
The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine;

But the two youngest loved more to be set
Down to the harp—because to music's charms
They added graceful necks, white hands and arms.

CVIII.

Sometimes a dance (though rarely on field days,
For then the gentlemen were rather tired)
Display'd some sylph-like figures in its maze;
Then there was small-talk ready when required;
Flirtation—but decorous; the mere praise
Of charms that should or should not be admired.
The hunters fought their fox-hunt o'er again,
And then retreated soberly—at ten.

CIX.

The politicians, in a nook apart,
Discuss'd the world, and settled all the spheres;
The wits watch'd every loop-hole for their art,
To introduce a bon-mot head and ears:
Small is the rest of those who would be smart,
A moment's good thing may have cost them years
Before they find an hour to introduce it,
And then, even *then*, some bore may make them lose it.

CX.

But all was gentle and aristocratic
In this our party; polish'd, smooth, and cold,
As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic.
There now are no Squire Westerns as of old;
And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
But fair as then, or fairer to behold.
We have no accomplish'd blackguards, like Tom Jones,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

||

CXI.

They separated at an early hour ;

That is, ere midnight—which is London's noon :
But in the country ladies seek their bower

A little earlier than the waning moon.
Peace to the slumbers of each folded flower—

May the rose call back its true colours soon !
Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,
And lower the price of rouge—at least some winters.

NOTES TO CANTO XIII.

Note 1, page 213, stanza vii.

*Rough Johnson, the great moralist, profess'd,
Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater!"*

"Sir, I like a good hater."—See the Life of Dr. Johnson, &c.

Note 2, page 219, stanza xxvi.

Also there bin another pious reason.

"With every thing that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise."—SHAKESPEARE.

Note 3, page 226, stanza xlv.

They and their bills, "Arcadians both."

"Arcades ambo."

Note 4, page 234, stanza lxxi.

Or wilder group of savage Salvatore's.

Salvator Rosa.

Note 5, page 235, stanza lxxii.

His bell-mouth'd goblet makes me feel quite Danish.

If I err not, "Your Dane" is one of Iago's catalogue of nations "exquisite in their drinking."

Note 6, page 237, stanza lxxviii.

Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura.

In Assyria.

Note 7, page 243, stanza xcvi.

“*That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies.*”

“Mrs. Adams answered Mr. Adams, that it was blasphemous to talk of Scripture out of church.” This dogma was broached to her husband—the best Christian in any book. See Joseph Andrews, in the latter chapters.

Note 8, page 246, stanza cvi.

And angling too, that solitary vice,

Whatever Isaac Walton sings or says:

The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet

Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

It would have taught him humanity at least. This sentimental savage, whom it is a mode to quote (amongst the novelists) to show their sympathy for innocent sports and old songs, teaches how to sew up frogs, and break their legs by way of experiment, in addition to the art of angling, the cruellest, the coldest, and the stupidest of pretended sports. They may talk about the beauties of nature, but the angler merely thinks of his dish of fish; he has no leisure to take his eyes from off the streams, and a single *bite* is worth to him more than all the scenery around. Besides, some fish bite best on a rainy day. The whale, the shark, and the tunny fishery have somewhat of noble and perilous in them; even net fishing, trawling, &c. are more humane and useful. But angling!—No angler can be a good man.

“One of the best men I ever knew,—as humane, delicate-minded, generous, and excellent a creature as any in the world, was an angler: true, he angled with painted flies, and would have been incapable of the extravagances of I. Walton.”

The above addition was made by a friend in reading over the MS.—“*Audi alteram partem*”—I leave it to counterbalance my own observation.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XIV.

I.

IF from great Nature's or our own abyss
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss—
But then 'twould spoil much good philosophy.
One system eats another up, and this
Much as old Saturn ate his progeny;
For when his pious consort gave him stones
In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

II.

But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
And eats her parents, albeit the digestion
Is difficult. Pray tell me, can you make fast,
After due search, your faith to any question?
Look back o'er ages, ere unto the stake fast
You bind yourself, and call some mode the best one.
Nothing more true than *not* to trust your senses;
And yet what are your other evidences?

III.

For me, I know nought; nothing I deny,
Admit, reject, condemn; and what know *you*,
Except perhaps that you were born to die?
And both may after all turn out untrue.
An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.

IV.

A sleep without dreams, after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay!
The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret)
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of life than dread of death.

V.

'Tis round him, near him, here, there, every where;
And there's a courage which grows out of fear,
Perhaps of all most desperate, which will dare
The worst to *know* it:—when the mountains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
You look down o'er the precipice, and drear
The gulf of rock yawns,—you can't gaze a minute
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.

VI.

'Tis true, you don't—but, pale and struck with terror,
Retire: but look into your past impression!
And you will find, though shuddering at the mirror
Of your own thoughts, in all their self-confession,
The lurking bias, be it truth or error,
To the *unknown*; a secret prepossession, [not,
To plunge with all your fears—but where? You know
And that's the reason why you do—or do not.

VII.

But what's this to the purpose? you will say.
Gent. reader, nothing; a mere speculation,
For which my sole excuse is—'tis my way,
Sometimes *with* and sometimes without occasion
I write what's uppermost, without delay;
This narrative is not meant for narration,
But a mere airy and fantastic basis,
To build up common things with common places.

VIII.

You know, or don't know, that great Bacon saith,
"Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the wind
And such a straw, borne on by human breath, [blows;"
Is poesy, according as the mind glows;
A paper kite which flies 'twixt life and death,
A shadow which the onward soul behind throws:
And mine's a bubble, not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.

IX.

The world is all before me—or behind;
For I have seen a portion of that same,
And quite enough for me to keep in mind;—
Of passions, too, I have proved enough to blame,
To the great pleasure of our friends, mankind,
Who like to mix some slight alloy with fame;
For I was rather famous in my time,
Until I fairly knock'd it up with rhyme.

X.

I have brought this world about my ears, and eke
The other; that's to say, the clergy—who
Upon my head have bid their thunders break
In pious libels by no means a few.
And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
Tiring old readers, nor discovering new.
In youth I wrote because my mind was full,
And now because I feel it growing dull.

XI.

But “why then publish?”—There are no rewards
Of fame or profit when the world grows weary.
I ask in turn,—Why do you play at cards? [dreary.
Why drink? Why read?—To make some hour less
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I've seen or ponder'd, sad or cheery;
And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink—I have had at least my dream.

XII.

I think that were I *certain* of success,
I hardly could compose another line:
So long I've battled either more or less,
That no defeat can drive me from the Nine.
This feeling 'tis not easy to express,
And yet 'tis not affected, I opine.
In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing—
The one is winning, and the other losing.

XIII.

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction:
She gathers a repertory of facts,
Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,
But mostly sings of human things and acts—
And that's one cause she meets with contradiction;
For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts;
And were her object only what's call'd glory,
With more ease too she'd tell a different story.

XIV.

Love, war, a tempest—surely there's variety;
Also a seasoning slight of lucubration;
A bird's eye view too of that wild, Society;
A slight glance thrown on men of every station.
If you have nought else, here's at least satiety
Both in performance and in preparation;
And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,
Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.

XV.

The portion of this world which I at present
Have taken up to fill the following sermon,
Is one of which there's no description recent:
The reason why, is easy to determine:
Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,
There is a sameness in its gems and ermine,
A dull and family likeness through all ages,
Of no great promise for poetic pages.

XVI.

With much to excite, there's little to exalt;
Nothing that speaks to all men and all times;
A sort of varnish over every fault;
A kind of common-place, even in their crimes;
Factitious passions, wit without much salt,
A want of that true nature which sublimizes
Whate'er it shows with truth; a smooth monotony
Of character, in those at least who have got any.

XVII.

Sometimes indeed, like soldiers off parade,
They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill;
But then the roll-call draws them back afraid;
And they must be or seem what they were: still
Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade;
But when of the first sight you have had your fill,
It palls—at least it did so upon me,
This paradise of pleasure and ennui.

XVIII.

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
Drest, voted, shone, and, may be, something more;
With dandies dined; heard senators declaiming;
Seen beauties brought to market by the score,
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming;
There's little left but to be bored or bore.
Witness those "*ci-devant jeunes hommes*" who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them.

XIX.

'Tis said—indeed a general complaint—
That no one has succeeded in describing
The monde, exactly as they ought to paint:
Some say, that authors only snatch, by bribing
The porter, some slight scandals strange and quaint,
To furnish matter for their moral gibing;
And that their books have but one style in common—
My lady's prattle, filter'd through her woman.

XX.

But this can't well be true, just now; for writers
Are grown of the beau monde a part potential:
I've seen them balance even the scale with fighters,
Especially when young, for that's essential.
Why do their sketches fail them as inditers
Of what they deem themselves most consequential,
The *real* portrait of the highest tribe?
'Tis that, in fact, there's little to describe.

XXI.

“*Haud ignara loquor;*” these are *Nugæ*, “*quarum Pars parva fui,*” but still art and part.

Now I could much more easily sketch a harem,

A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,

Than these things; and besides, I wish to spare 'em,

For reasons which I choose to keep apart.

“*Velabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgaret*”—

Which means, that vulgar people must not share it.

XXII.

And therefore what I throw off is ideal—

Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of freemasons;

Which bears the same relation to the real,

As Captain Parry's voyage may do to Jason's.

The grand arcanum's not for men to see all;

My music has some mystic diapasons;

And there is much which could not be appreciated

In any manner by the uninitiated.

XXIII.

Alas! worlds fall—and woman, since she fell'd

The world (as, since that history, less polite
Than true, hath been a creed so strictly held)

Has not yet given up the practice quite.

Poor thing of usages! coerced, compell'd,

Victim when wrong, and martyr oft when right,
Condemn'd to child-bed, as men for their sins
Have shaving too entail'd upon their chins,—

XXIV.

A daily plague, which in the aggregate
May average on the whole with parturition.
But as to women, who can penetrate
The real sufferings of their she condition?
Man's very sympathy with their estate
Has much of selfishness, and more suspicion.
Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
But form good housekeepers, to breed a nation.

XXV.

All this were very well, and can't be better;
But even this is difficult, Heaven knows,
So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends and foes,
The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,
That—but ask any woman if she'd choose
(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a schoolboy or a queen?

XXVI.

“Petticoat influence” is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain be thought
To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;
But since beneath it upon earth we are brought,
By various joltings of life's hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat—
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

XXVII.

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil,
Which holds a treasure, like a miser's hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth conceal—
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,
A cure for grief—for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and peeping ankle?

XXVIII.

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a sirocco, for example, blowing,
When even the sea looks dim with all its spray,
And sulkily the river's ripple's flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober, sad antithesis to glowing,—
'Tis pleasant, if *then* any thing is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.

XXIX.

We left our heroes and our heroines
In that fair clime which don't depend on climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
Because the sun, and stars, and aught that shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most sublime at,
Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun*—
Whether a sky's or tradesman's is all one.

XXX.

An in-door life is less poetical;

And out of door hath showers, and mists, and sleet,
With which I could not brew a pastoral.

But be it as it may, a bard must meet
All difficulties, whether great or small,

To spoil his undertaking or complete,
And work away like spirit upon matter,
Embarrass'd somewhat both with fire and water.

XXXI.

Juan—in this respect, at least, like saints—

Was all things unto people of all sorts,
And lived contentedly, without complaints,

In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts—
Born with that happy soul which seldom faints,

And mingling modestly in toils or sports.
He likewise could be most things to all women,
Without the coxcombry of certain *she* men.

XXXII.

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;

'Tis also subject to the double danger
Of tumbling first, and having in exchange

Some pleasant jesting at the awkward stranger:
But Juan had been early taught to range

The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd avenger,
So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
Knew that he had a rider on his back.

XXXIII.

And now in this new field, with some applause,
He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
And never *craned*,⁽¹⁾ and made but few "*faux pas*,"
And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail.
He broke, 'tis true, some statutes of the laws
Of hunting—for the sagest youth is frail;
Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and then,
And once o'er several country gentlemen.

XXXIV.

But on the whole, to general admiration
He acquitted both himself and horse: the squires
Marvell'd at merit of another nation; [—Sires,
The boors cried "Dang it! who'd have thought it?"
The Nestors of the sporting generation,
Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires;
The huntsman's self relented to a grin,
And rated him almost a whipper-in.

XXXV.

Such were his trophies—not of spear and shield,
But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes' brushes;
Yet I must own,—although in this I yield
To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes,—
He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales, bushes,
And what not, though he rode beyond all price,
Ask'd next day, "If men ever hunted *twice*?"

XXXVI.

He also had a quality uncommon
To early risers after a long chase,
Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
December's drowsy day to his dull race,—
A quality agreeable to woman,
When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
Who likes a listener, whether saint or sinner,—
He did not fall asleep just after dinner;

XXXVII.

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
And shone in the best part of dialogue,
By humouring always what they might assert,
And listening to the topics most in vogue;
Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert;
And smiling but in secret—cunning rogue!
He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer;—
In short, there never was a better hearer.

XXXVIII.

And then he danced;—all foreigners excel
The serious Angles in the eloquence
Of pantomime;—he danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense—
A thing in footing indispensable:
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

XXXIX.

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a crotchet critic's rigour.
Such classic pas—sans flaws—set off our hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero;

XL.

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco, which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
The "*tout ensemble*" of his movements wore a
Grace of the soft ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the dolour
Of bards and prozers, words are void of colour.

XLI.

No marvel then he was a favourite;
A full-grown Cupid, very much admired;
A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
At least he kept his vanity retired.
Such was his tact, he could alike delight
The chaste, and those who are not so much inspired.
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved "*tracasserie*,"
Began to treat him with some small "*agacerie*."

XLII.

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated
For several winters in the grand, *grand monde*.

I'd rather not say what might be related
Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground;

Besides there might be falsehood in what's stated:
Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLIII.

This noble personage began to look

A little black upon this new flirtation;
But such small licences must lovers brook,
Mere freedoms of the female corporation.
Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke!

'Twill but precipitate a situation
Extremely disagreeable, but common
To calculators when they count on woman.

XLIV.

The circle smiled, then whisper'd, and then sneer'd;
The Misses bridled, and the matrons frown'd;
Some hoped things might not turn out as they fear'd;
Some would not deem such women could be found;
Some ne'er believed one half of what they heard;
Some look'd perplex'd, and others look'd profound;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLV.

But what is odd, none ever named the duke,
Who, one might think, was something in the affair:
True, he was absent, and 'twas rumour'd, took
But small concern about the when, or where,
Or what his consort did: if he could brook
Her gaieties, none had a right to stare:
Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
Which never meets, and therefore can't fall out.

XLVI.

But, oh! that I should ever pen so sad a line!
Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
Began to think the duchess' conduct free;
Regretting much that she had chosen so bad a line,
And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Look'd grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

XLVII.

There's nought in this bad world like sympathy:
'Tis so becoming to the soul and face,
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace.
Without a friend, what were humanity,
To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
Consoling us with—"Would you had thought twice!
Ah! if you had but follow'd my advice!"

XLVIII.

O Job! you had two friends: one's quite enough,
Especially when we are ill at ease;
They are but bad pilots when the weather's rough,
Doctors less famous for their cures than fees.
Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:
When your affairs come round, one way or t' other,
Go to the coffee-house, and take another. ⁽²⁾

XLIX.

But this is not my maxim: had it been,
Some heart-aches had been spared me: yet I care not—
I would not be a tortoise in his screen
Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not.
'Tis better on the whole to have felt and seen
That which humanity may bear, or bear not:
'Twill teach discernment to the sensitive,
And not to pour their ocean in a sieve.

L.

Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight blast,
Is that portentous phrase, "I told you so,"
Utter'd by friends, those prophets of the past,
Who, 'stead of saying what you now should do,
Own they foresaw that you would fall at last,
And solace your slight lapse 'gainst "*bonos mores*,"
With a long memorandum of old stories.

LI.

The Lady Adeline's serene severity

Was not confined to feeling for her friend,
Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
Unless her habits should begin to mend:

But Juan also shared in her austerity,

But mix'd with pity, pure as e'er was penn'd:
His inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
And (as her junior by six weeks) his youth.

LII.

These forty days' advantage of her years—

And hers were those which can face calculation,
Boldly referring to the list of peers

And noble births, nor dread the enumeration—
Gave her a right to have maternal fears

For a young gentleman's fit education,
Though she was far from that leap year, whose leap,
In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

LIII.

This may be fix'd at somewhere before thirty—

Say seven-and-twenty; for I never knew
The strictest in chronology and virtue

Advance beyond, while they could pass for new.
O Time! why dost not pause? Thy scythe, so dirty

With rust, should surely cease to hack and hew.
Reset it; shave more smoothly, also slower,
If but to keep thy credit as a mower.

LIV.

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,

Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:

'Twas rather her experience made her sage,

For she had seen the world and stood its test,
As I have said in—I forget what page;

My Muse despises reference, as you have guess'd
By this time;—but strike six from seven-and-twenty,
And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

I.V.

At sixteen she came out; presented, vaunted,

She put all coronets into commotion:

At seventeen too the world was still enchanted

With the new Venus of their brilliant ocean:

At eighteen, though below her feet still panted

A hecatomb of suitors with devotion,

She had consented to create again

That Adam, called "The happiest of men."

LVI.

Since then she had sparkled through three glowing

Admired, adored; but also so correct, [winters,

That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,

Without the apparel of being circumspect:

They could not even glean the slightest splinters

From off the marble, which had no defect.

She had also snatch'd a moment since her marriage

To bear a son and heir—and one miscarriage.

LVII.

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her,
Those little glitterers of the London night;
But none of these possess'd a sting to wound her—
She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's flight.
Perhaps she wish'd an aspirant profounder;
But whatsoe'er she wish'd, she acted right;
And whether coldness, pride, or virtue, dignify
A woman, so she's good, what does it signify?

LVIII.

I hate a motive, like a lingering bottle
Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,
Leaving all-claretless the unmoisten'd throttle,
Especially with politics on hand;
I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,
Who whirl the dust as simooms whirl the sand;
I hate it, as I hate an argument,
A laureate's ode, or servile peer's "content."

LIX.

'Tis sad to hack into the roots of things,
They are so much intertwined with the earth;
So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
I reckon not if an acorn gave it birth.
To trace all actions to their secret springs
Would make indeed some melancholy mirth;
But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.⁽³⁾

LX.

With the kind view of saving an éclat,
Both to the duchess and diplomatist,
The Lady Adeline, as soon's she saw
That Juan was unlikely to resist—
(For foreigners don't know that a *faux pas*
In England ranks quite on a different list
From those of other lands unblest with juries,
Whose verdict for such sin a certain cure is;—)

LXI.

The Lady Adeline resolved to take
Such measures as she thought might best impede
The farther progress of this sad mistake.
She thought with some simplicity indeed;
But innocence is bold even at the stake,
And simple in the world, and doth not need
Nor use those palisades by dames erected,
Whose virtue lies in never being detected.

LXII.

It was not that she fear'd the very worst:
His grace was an enduring, married man,
And was not likely all at once to burst
Into a scene, and swell the clients' clan
Of Doctors' Commons: but she dreaded first
The magic of her grace's talisman,
And next a quarrel (as he seem'd to fret)
With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

LXIII.

Her grace too pass'd for being an intrigante,
And somewhat *méchante* in her amorous sphere;
One of those pretty, precious plagues, which haunt
A lover with caprices soft and dear,
That like to *make* a quarrel, when they can't
Find one, each day of the delightful year;
Bewitching, torturing, as they freeze or glow,
And—what is worst of all—won't let you go:

LXIV.

The sort of thing to turn a young man's head,
Or make a Werter of him in the end.
No wonder then a purer soul should dread
This sort of chaste *liaison* for a friend;
It were much better to be wed or dead,
Than wear a heart a woman loves to rend.
'Tis best to pause, and think, ere you rush on,
If that a "*bonne fortune*" be really "*bonne*."

LXV.

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,
Which really knew or thought it knew no guile,
She call'd her husband now and then apart,
And bade him counsel Juan. With a smile
Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art
To wean Don Juan from the siren's wile;
And answer'd, like a statesman or a prophet,
In such guise that she could make nothing of it.

LXVI.

Firstly, he said, "he never interfered
In any body's business but the king's:"
Next, that "he never judged from what appear'd,
Without strong reason, of those sorts of things:"
Thirdly, that "Juan had more brain than beard,
And was not to be held in leading-strings;"
And fourthly, what need hardly be said twice,
"That good but rarely came from good advice."

LXVII.

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the truth
Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse
To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth—
At least as far as *bienseance* allows:
That time would temper Juan's faults of youth;
That young men rarely made monastic vows;
That opposition only more attaches——
But here a messenger brought in despatches:

LXVIII.

And being of the council call'd "the Privy,"
Lord Henry walk'd into his cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy
To tell how he reduced the nation's debt;
And if their full contents I do not give ye,
It is because I do not know them yet;
But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine epic and its index.

LXIX.

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are coin'd in conversation's mint,
And pass, for want of better, though not new:
Then broke his packet, to see what was in't,
And having casually glanced it through,
Retired; and, as he went out, calmly kiss'd her,
Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

LXX.

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,
A figure fit to walk before a king;
Tall, stately, form'd to lead the courtly van
On birthdays, glorious with a star and string;
The very model of a chamberlain—
And such I mean to make him when I reign.

LXXI.

But there was something wanting on the whole—
I don't know what, and therefore cannot tell—
Which pretty women—the sweet souls!—call *soul*.
Certes it was not body; he was well
Proportion'd, as a poplar or a pole,
A handsome man, that human miracle;
And in each circumstance of love or war
Had still preserved his perpendicular.

LXXII.

Still there was something wanting, as I've said—
That undefinable "*Je ne sçais quoi*,"
Which, for what I know, may of yore have led
To Homer's Iliad, since it drew to Troy
The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's bed;
Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dardan boy
Was much inferior to King Menelaüs:—
But thus it is some women will betray us.

LXXIII.

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved
By turns the difference of the several sexes;
Neither can show quite *how* they would be loved.
The sensual for a short time but connects us—
The sentimental boasts to be unmoved;
But both together form a kind of centaur,
Upon whose back 'tis better not to venture.

LXXIV.

A something all-sufficient for the *heart*
Is that for which the sex are always seeking:
But how to fill up that same vacant part?
There lies the rub—and this they are but weak in.
Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
They run before the wind through high seas breaking;
And when they have made the shore through every shock,
'Tis odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

LXXV.

There is a flower call'd "Love in Idleness,"
For which see Shakspeare's ever-blooming garden;—
I will not make his great description less,
And beg his British godship's humble pardon,
If in my extremity of rhyme's distress,
I touch a single leaf where he is warden;—
But though the flower is different, with the French
Or Swiss Rousseau, cry "*Voilà la Pervenche!*"

LXXVI.

Eureka! I have found it! What I mean
To say is, not that love is idleness,
But that in love such idleness has been
An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
Hard labour's an indifferent go-between;
Your men of business are not apt to express
Much passion, since the merchant-ship, the Argo,
Convey'd Medea as her supercargo.

LXXVII.

"*Beatus ille procul!*" from "*negotiis*,"
Saith Horace; the great little poet's wrong;
His other maxim, "*Noscitur a sociis*,"
Is much more to the purpose of his song;
Though even that were sometimes too ferocious,
Unless good company be kept too long;
But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or station,
Thrice happy they who *have* an occupation!

LXXVIII.

Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing,
Eve made up millinery with fig leaves—
The earliest knowledge from the tree so knowing,
As far as I know, that the church receives:
And since that time it need not cost much showing,
That many of the ills o'er which man grieves,
And still more women, spring from not employing
Some hours to make the remnant worth enjoying.

LXXIX.

And hence high life is oft a dreary void,
A rack of pleasures, where we must invent
A something wherewithal to be annoy'd.
Bards may sing what they please about *Content*;
Contented, when translated, means but cloy'd;
And hence arise the woes of sentiment,
Blue devils, and blue-stockings, and romances
Reduced to practice, and perform'd like dances.

LXXX.

I do declare, upon an affidavit,
Romances I ne'er read like those I have seen;
Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it,
Would some believe that such a tale had been:
But such intent I never had, nor have it;
Some truths are better kept behind a screen,
Especially when they would look like lies;
I therefore deal in generalities.

LXXXI.

"An oyster may be cross'd in love,"—and why?
Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,
Much as a monk may do within his cell:
And *à propos* of monks, their piety
With sloth hath found it difficult to dwell;
Those vegetables of the Catholic creed
Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.

LXXXII.

O Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
Whose merit none enough can sing or say,
Thou hast struck one immense Colossus down,
Thou moral Washington of Africa!
But there's another little thing, I own,
Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
And set the other half of earth to rights;
You have freed the *blacks*—now pray shut up the whites.

LXXXIII.

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander;
Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;
Teach them that "sauce for goose is sauce for gander,"
And ask them how *they* like to be in thrall?
Shut up each high heroic salamander,
Who eats fire gratis (since the pay's but small);
Shut up—no, *not* the King, but the Pavilion,
Or else 'twill cost us all another million.

LXXXIV.

Shut up the world at large, let Bedlam out;
And you will be perhaps surprised to find
All things pursue exactly the same route,
As now with those of *soi-disant* sound mind.
This I could prove beyond a single doubt,
Were there a jot of sense among mankind;
But till that point *d'appui* is found, alas!
Like Archimedes, I leave earth as 't was.

LXXXV.

Our gentle Adeline had one defect—
Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansion;
Her conduct had been perfectly correct,
As she had seen nought claiming its expansion.
A wavering spirit may be easier wreck'd,
Because 'tis frailer, doubtless, than a stanch one;
But when the latter works its own undoing,
Its inner crash is like an earthquake's ruin.

LXXXVI.

She loved her lord, or thought so; but *that* love
Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,
The stone of Sysiphus, if once we move
Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil.
She had nothing to complain of, or reprove,
No bickerings, no connubial turmoil:
Their union was a model to behold,
Serene and noble,—conjugal, but cold.

LXXXVII.

There was no great disparity of years,
Though much in temper; but they never clash'd:
They moved like stars united in their spheres,
Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters wash'd,
Where mingled and yet separate appears
The river from the lake, all bluely dash'd
Through the serene and placid glassy deep,
Which fain would lull its river-child to sleep.

LXXXVIII.

Now when she once had ta'en an interest
In any thing, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best,
Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:
Impressions were much stronger than she guess'd,
And gather'd as they run like growing water
Upon her mind; the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impress'd.

LXXXIX.

But when it was, she had that lurking demon
Of double nature, and thus doubly named—
Firmness yclept in heroes, kings, and seamen,
That is, when they succeed; but greatly blamed
As *obstinacy*, both in men and women,
Whene'er their triumph pales, or star is tamed:—
And 'twill perplex the casuist in morality
To fix the due bounds of this dangerous quality.

XC.

Had Buonaparte won at Waterloo,

It had been firmness; now 'tis pertinacity:
Must the event decide between the two?

I leave it to your people of sagacity
To draw the line between the false and true,

If such can e'er be drawn by man's capacity:
My business is with Lady Adeline,
Who in her way too was a heroine.

XCI.

She knew not her own heart; then how should I?

I think not she was *then* in love with Juan:
If so, she would have had the strength to fly

The wild sensation, unto her a new one:
She merely felt a common sympathy

(I will not say it was a false or true one)
In him, because she thought he was in danger,—
Her husband's friend, her own, young, and a stranger,

XCII.

She was, or thought she was, his friend—and this

Without the farce of friendship, or romance
Platonism, which leads so oft amiss

Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,
Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss.

To thus much Adeline would not advance;
But of such friendship as man's may to man be
She was as capable as woman can be.

XCIII.

No doubt the secret influence of the sex
Will there, as also in the ties of blood,
An innocent predominance annex,
And tune the concord to a finer mood.
If free from passion, which all friendship checks,
And your true feelings fully understood,
No friend like to a woman earth discovers,
So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

XCIV.

Love bears within its breast the very germ
Of change; and how should this be otherwise?
That violent things more quickly find a term
Is shown through nature's whole analogies;
And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
Would you have endless lightning in the skies?
Methinks Love's very title says enough:
How should "the *tender* passion" e'er be *tough*?

XCV.

Alas! by all experience, seldom yet
(I merely quote what I have heard from many)
Had lovers not some reason to regret
The passion which made Solomon a Zany.
I've also seen some wives (not to forget
The marriage state, the best or worst of any)
Who were the very paragons of wives,
Yet made the misery of at least two lives.

XCVI.

I've also seen some female *friends* ('tis odd,
But true—as, if expedient, I could prove)
That faithful were through thick and thin, abroad,
At home, far more than ever yet was Love—
Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;
Who fought, and fight, in absence, too, my battles,
Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

XCVII.

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
Grew friends in this or any other sense
Will be discuss'd hereafter, I opine:
At present I am glad of a pretence
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
And keeps the atrocious reader in *suspense*;
The surest way for ladies and for books
To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.

XCVIII.

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied Spanish
To read Don Quixote in the original,
A pleasure before which all others vanish;
Whether their talk was of the kind call'd "small,"
Or serious, are the topics I must banish
To the next Canto; where perhaps I shall
Say something to the purpose, and display
Considerable talent in my way.

XCIX.

Above all, I beg all men to forbear
Anticipating aught about the matter:
They'll only make mistakes about the fair,
And Juan too, especially the latter.
And I shall take a much more serious air
Than I have yet done, in this epic satire.
It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
Will fall; but if they do, 'twill be their ruin.

C.

But great things spring from little:—Would you think,
That in our youth, as dangerous a passion
As e'er brought man and woman to the brink
Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,
As few would ever dream could form the link
Of such a sentimental situation?
You'll never guess, I'll bet you millions, millions—
It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards.

CI.

'Tis strange,—but true; for truth is always strange;
Stranger than fiction: if it could be told,
How much would novels gain by the exchange;
How differently the world would men behold!
How oft would vice and virtue places change!
The new world would be nothing to the old,
If some Columbus of the moral seas
Would show mankind their souls' antipodes.

CII.

What "antres vast and deserts idle" then
 Would be discover'd in the human soul!
What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,
 With self-love in the centre as their pole!
What Anthropophagi are nine of ten
 Of those who hold the kingdoms in control!
Were things but only call'd by their right name,
Cæsar himself would be ashamed of fame.

NOTES TO CANTO XIV.

Note 1, page 262, stanza xxxiii.

And never craned, and made but few "faux pas."

Craning.—"To crane" is, or was, an expression used to denote a gentleman's stretching out his neck over a hedge, "to look before he leaped:"—a pause in his "vaulting ambition," which in the field doth occasion some delay and execration in those who may be immediately behind the equestrian sceptic. "Sir, if you don't choose to take the leap, let me"—was a phrase which generally sent the aspirant on again; and to good purpose: for though "the horse and rider" might fall, they made a gap, through which, and over him and his steed, the field might follow.

Note 2, page 267, stanza xlviii.

*Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:
When your affairs come round, one way or t' other,
Go to the coffee-house, and take another.*

In Swift's or Horace Walpole's letters I think it is mentioned, that somebody regretting the loss of a friend, was answered by an universal Pylades: "When I lose one, I go to the Saint James's Coffee-house, and take another."

I recollect having heard an anecdote of the same kind. Sir W. D. was a great gamester. Coming in one day to the club of which he was a member, he was observed to look melancholy. "What is the matter, Sir William?" cried Hare, of facetious memory. "Ah!" replied Sir W. "I have just lost poor Lady D." "Lost! What at? Quinze or Hazard?" was the consolatory rejoinder of the querist.

Note 3, page 270, stanza lix.

*But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.*

The famous Chancellor Oxenstiern said to his son, on the latter expressing his surprise upon the great effects arising from petty causes in the presumed mystery of politics: "You see by this, my son, with how little wisdom the kingdoms of the world are governed."

DON JUAN.

CANTO XV.

I.

AH!—What should follow slips from my reflection;
Whatever follows ne'ertheless may be
As à-propos of hope or retrospection,
As though the lurking thought had follow'd free.
All present life is but an interjection,
An "Oh!" or "Ah!" of joy or misery,
Or a "Ha! ha!" or "Bah!"—a yawn, or "Pooh!"
Of which perhaps the latter is most true.

II.

But, more or less, the whole's a syncopé
Or a singultus—emblems of emotion,
The grand antithesis to great ennui,
Wherewith we break our bubbles on the ocean,
That watery outline of eternity,
Or miniature at least, as is my notion,
Which ministers unto the soul's delight,
In seeing matters which are out of sight.

III.

But all are better than the sigh suppress,
Corroding in the cavern of the heart,
Making the countenance a masque of rest,
And turning human nature to an art.
Few men dare show their thoughts of worst or best;
Dissimulation always sets apart
A corner for herself; and therefore fiction
Is that which passes with least contradiction.

IV.

Ah! who can tell? Or rather, who can not
Remember, without telling, passion's errors?
The drainer of oblivion, even the sot,
Hath got blue devils for his morning mirrors:
What though on Lethe's stream he seem to float,
He cannot sink his tremors or his terrors;
The ruby glass that shakes within his hand
Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst sand.

V.

And as for love—O love!——We will proceed.
The Lady Adeline Amundeville,
A pretty name as one would wish to read,
Must perch harmonious on my tuneful quill.
There's music in the sighing of a reed;
There's music in the gushing of a rill;
There's music in all things, if men had ears:
Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.

VI.

The Lady Adeline, right honourable,
And honour'd, ran a risk of growing less so;
For few of the soft sex are very stable
In their resolves—alas! that I should say so!
They differ as wine differs from its label,
When once decanted;—I presume to guess so,
But will not swear: yet both upon occasion,
Till old, may undergo adulteration.

VII.

But Adeline was of the purest vintage,
The unmingled essence of the grape; and yet
Bright as a new Napoleon from its mintage,
Or glorious as a diamond richly set;
A page where Time should hesitate to print age,
And for which Nature might forego her debt—
Sole creditor whose process doth involve in't
The luck of finding every body solvent.

VIII.

O Death! thou dunnest of all duns! thou daily
Knockest at doors, at first with modest tap,
Like a meek tradesman when, approaching palely,
Some splendid debtor he would take by sap:
But oft denied, as patience 'gins to fail, he
Advances with exasperated rap,
And (if let in) insists, in terms unhandsome,
On ready money or "a draft on Ransom."

IX.

Whate'er thou takest, spare a while poor Beauty!

She is so rare, and thou hast so much prey.

What though she now and then may slip from duty,

The more's the reason why you ought to stay.

Gaunt Gourmand! with whole nations for your booty,

You should be civil in a modest way:

Suppress, then, some slight feminine diseases,

And take as many heroes as Heaven pleases.

X.

Fair Adeline, the more ingenuous

Where she was interested (as was said),

Because she was not apt, like some of us,

To like too readily, or too high bred

To show it—(points we need not now discuss)—

Would give up artlessly both heart and head

Unto such feelings as seem'd innocent,

For objects worthy of the sentiment.

XI.

Some parts of Juan's history, which Rumour,

That live gazette, had scatter'd to disfigure,

She had heard; but women hear with more good humour

Such aberrations than we men of rigour:

Besides, his conduct, since in England, grew more

Strict, and his mind assumed a manlier vigour;

Because he had, like Alcibiades,

The art of living in all climes with ease.

XII.

His manner was perhaps the more seductive,
Because he ne'er seem'd anxious to seduce;
Nothing affected, studied, or constructive
Of coxcombry or conquest: no abuse
Of his attractions marr'd the fair perspective,
To indicate a Cupidon broke loose,
And seem to say, "Resist us if you can"—
Which makes a dandy while it spoils a man.

XIII.

They are wrong—that's not the way to set about it;
As, if they told the truth, could well be shown.
But, right or wrong, Don Juan was without it;
In fact, his manner was his own alone:
Sincere he was—at least you could not doubt it,
In listening merely to his voice's tone.
The devil hath not in all his quiver's choice
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.

XIV.

By nature soft, his whole address held off
Suspicion: though not timid, his regard
Was such as rather seem'd to keep aloof,
To shield himself than put you on your guard:
Perhaps 'twas hardly quite assured enough,
But modesty's at times its own reward,
Like virtue; and the absence of pretension
Will go much farther than there's need to mention.

XV.

Serene, accomplish'd, cheerful but not loud;
Insinuating without insinuation;
Observant of the foibles of the crowd,
Yet ne'er betraying this in conversation;
Proud with the proud, yet courteously proud,
So as to make them feel he knew his station
And theirs:—without a struggle for priority,
He neither brook'd nor claim'd superiority.

XVI.

That is, with men: with women he was what
They pleased to make or take him for; and their
Imagination's quite enough for that:
So that the outline's tolerably fair,
They fill the canvas up—and "verbum sat."
If once their phantasies be brought to bear
Upon an object, whether sad or playful,
They can transfigure brighter than a Raphael.

XVII.

Adeline, no deep judge of character,
Was apt to add a colouring from her own:
'Tis thus the good will amiably err,
And eke the wise, as has been often shown.
Experience is the chief philosopher,
But saddest when his science is well known:
And persecuted sages teach the schools
Their folly in forgetting there are fools.

XVIII.

Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?
Great Socrates? And thou, Diviner still, ⁽¹⁾
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,
And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?
Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was thy toil rewarded? We might fill
Volumes with similar sad illustrations,
But leave them to the conscience of the nations.

XIX.

I perch upon an humbler promontory,
Amidst life's infinite variety:
With no great care for what is nicknamed glory,
But speculating as I cast mine eye
On what may suit or may not suit my story,
And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
With any body in a ride or walk.

XX.

I don't know that there may be much ability
Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;
But there's a conversational facility,
Which may round off an hour upon a time.
Of this I'm sure at least, there's no servility
In mine irregularity of chime,
Which rings what's uppermost of new or hoary,
Just as I feel the "Improvisatore."

XXI.

“*Omnia vult belle Matho dicere—dic aliquando*

Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.”

The first is rather more than mortal can do

The second may be sadly done or gaily;

The third is still more difficult to stand to;

The fourth we hear, and see, and say too, daily:

The whole together is what I could wish

To serve in this conundrum of a dish.

XXII.

A modest hope—but modesty’s my forte,

And pride my feeble:—let us ramble on.

I meant to make this poem very short,

But now I can’t tell where it may not run.

No doubt, if I had wish’d to pay my court

To critics, or to hail the *setting* sun

Of tyranny of all kinds, my concision

Were more;—but I was born for opposition.

XXIII.

But then ’tis mostly on the weaker side;

So that I verily believe if they

Who now are basking in their full-blown pride

Were shaken down, and “dogs had had their day,”

Though at the first I might perchance deride

Their tumble, I should turn the other way,

And wax an ultra-royalist in loyalty,

Because I hate even democratic royalty.

XXIV.

I think I should have made a decent spouse,
If I had never proved the soft condition;
I think I should have made monastic vows,
But for my own peculiar superstition:
'Gainst rhyme I never should have knock'd my brows,
Nor broken my own head, nor that of Priscian,
Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
If some one had not told me to forego it.

XXV.

But "laissez aller"—knights and dames I sing,
Such as the times may furnish. 'Tis a flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrte:
The difficulty lies in colouring
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight)
With Nature manners which are artificial,
And rend'ring general that which is especial.

XXVI.

The difference is, that in the days of old
Men made the manners; manners now make men—
Pinn'd like a flock, and fleeced too in their fold,
At least nine, and a ninth beside of ten.
Now this at all events must render cold
Your writers, who must either draw again
Days better drawn before, or else assume
The present, with their common-place costume.

XXVII.

We'll do our best to make the best on't:—March!

March, my Muse! If you cannot fly, yet flutter;
And when you may not be sublime, be arch,

Or starch, as are the edicts statesmen utter.

We surely may find something worth research:

Columbus found a new world in a cutter,
Or brigantine, or pink, of no great tonnage,
While yet America was in her non-age.

XXVIII.

When Adeline, in all her growing sense

Of Juan's merits and his situation,

Felt on the whole an interest intense—

Partly perhaps because a fresh sensation,
Or that he had an air of innocence,

Which is for innocence a sad temptation,—

As women hate half measures, on the whole,
She 'gan to ponder how to save his soul.

XXIX.

She had a good opinion of advice,

Like all who give and eke receive it gratis,

For which small thanks are still the market price,

Even where the article at highest rate is:

She thought upon the subject twice or thrice,

And morally decided, the best state is

For morals, marriage; and this question carried,

She seriously advised him to get married.

XXX.

Juan replied, with all becoming deference,
He had a predilection for that tie;
But that, at present, with immediate reference
To his own circumstances, there might lie
Some difficulties, as in his own preference,
Or that of her to whom he might apply:
That still he'd wed with such or such a lady,
If that they were not married all already.

XXXI.

Next to the making matches for herself,
And daughters, brothers, sisters, kith or kin,
Arranging them like books on the same shelf,
There's nothing women love to dabble in
More (like a stock-holder in growing pelf)
Than match-making in general: 'tis no sin
Certes, but a preventative, and therefore
That is, no doubt, the only reason wherefore.

XXXII.

But never yet (except of course a miss
Unwed, or mistress never to be wed,
Or wed already, who object to this)
Was there chaste dame who had not in her head
Some drama of the marriage unities,
Observed as strictly both at board and bed,
As those of Aristotle, though sometimes
They turn out melodrames or pantomimes.

XXXIII.

They generally have some only son,
Some heir to a large property, some friend
Of an old family, some gay Sir John,
Or grave Lord George, with whom perhaps might end
A line, and leave posterity undone,
Unless a marriage was applied to mend
The prospect and their morals: and besides,
They have at hand a blooming glut of brides.

XXXIV.

From these they will be careful to select,
For this an heiress, and for that a beauty;
For one a songstress who hath no defect,
For t'other one who promises much duty;
For this a lady no one can reject,
Whose sole accomplishments were quite a booty;
A second for her excellent connexions;
A third, because there can be no objections.

XXXV.

When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd marriage⁽²⁾
In his harmonious settlement—(which flourishes
Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage,
Because it breeds no more mouths than it nourishes,
Without those sad expenses which disparage
What Nature naturally most encourages)—
Why call'd he "Harmony" a state sans wedlock?
Now here I have got the preacher at a dead lock.

XXXVI.

Because he either meant to sneer at harmony
Or marriage, by divorcing them thus oddly.
But whether reverend Rapp learn'd this in Germany
Or no, 'tis said his sect is rich and godly,
Pious and pure, beyond what I can term any
Of ours, although they propagate more broadly.
My objection's to his title, not his ritual,
Although I wonder how it grew habitual.

XXXVII.

But Rapp is the reverse of zealous matrons,
Who favour, malgré Malthus, generation—
Professors of that genial art, and patrons
Of all the modest part of propagation;
Which after all at such a desperate rate runs,
That half its produce tends to emigration,
That sad result of passions and potatoes—
Two weeds which pose our economic Catos.

XXXVIII.

Had Adeline read Malthus? I can't tell;
I wish she had: his book's the eleventh commandment,
Which says, "Thou shalt not marry," unless *well*:
This he (as far as I can understand) meant.
'Tis not my purpose on his views to dwell,
Nor canvass what "so eminent a hand" meant;⁽³⁾
But certes it conducts to lives ascetic,
Or turning marriage into arithmetic.

XXXIX.

But Adeline, who probably presumed
That Juan had enough of maintenance,
Or *separate* maintenance, in case 'twas doom'd—
As on the whole it is an even chance
That bridegrooms, after they are fairly *groom'd*,
May retrograde a little in the dance
Of marriage—(which might form a painter's fame,
Like Holbein's "Dance of Death"—but 'tis the same);—

XL.

But Adeline determined Juan's wedding
In her own mind, and that's enough for woman:
But then, with whom? There was the sage Miss Reading,
Miss Raw, Miss Flaw, Miss Showman, and Miss
Knowman,
And the two fair co-heiresses Giltbedding.
She deem'd his merits something more than common:
All these were unobjectionable matches,
And might go on, if well wound up, like watches.

XLI.

There was Miss Millpond, smooth as summer's sea,
That usual paragon, an only daughter,
Who seem'd the cream of equanimity, [water,
Till skimm'd—and then there was some milk and
With a slight shade of blue too it might be,
Beneath the surface; but what did it matter?
Love's riotous, but marriage should have quiet,
And being consumptive, live on a milk diet.

XLII.

And then there was the Miss Audacia Shoestring,
A dashing demoiselle of good estate,
Whose heart was fix'd upon a star or blue string;
But whether English dukes grew rare of late,
Or that she had not harp'd upon the true string,
By which such sirens can attract our great,
She took up with some foreign younger brother,
A Russ or Turk—the one's as good as t'other.

XLIII.

And then there was—but why should I go on,
Unless the ladies should go off?—there was
Indeed a certain fair and fairy one,
Of the best class, and better than her class,—
Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
O'er life, too sweet an image for such glass,
A lovely being, scarcely form'd or moulded,
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;

XLIV.

Rich, noble, but an orphan; left an only
Child to the care of guardians good and kind;
But still her aspect had an air so lonely!
Blood is not water; and where shall we find
Feelings of youth like those which overthrown lie
By death, when we are left, alas! behind,
To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb?

XLV.

Early in years, and yet more infantine
In figure, she had something of sublime
In eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs' shine.
All youth—but with an aspect beyond time;
Radiant and grave—as pitying man's decline;
Mournful—but mournful of another's crime,
She look'd as if she sat by Eden's door,
And grieved for those who could return no more.

XLVI.

She was a Catholic too, sincere, austere,
As far as her own gentle heart allow'd,
And deem'd that fallen worship far more dear
Perhaps because 'twas fallen: her sires were proud
Of deeds and days when they had fill'd the ear
Of nations, and had never bent or bow'd
To novel power; and as she was the last,
She held their old faith and old feelings fast.

XLVII.

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew
As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,
As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
And kept her heart serene within its zone.
There was awe in the homage which she drew;
Her spirit seem'd as seated on a throne
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength—most strange in one so young!

XLVIII.

Now it so happen'd, in the catalogue
Of Adeline, Aurora was omitted,
Although her birth and wealth had given her vogue
Beyond the charmers we have already cited;
Her beauty also seem'd to form no clog
Against her being mention'd as well fitted,
By many virtues, to be worth the trouble
Of single gentlemen who would be double.

XLIX.

And this omission, like that of the bust
Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius,
Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
This he express'd half smiling and half serious;
When Adeline replied with some disgust,
And with an air, to say the least, imperious,
She marvell'd "what he saw in such a baby
As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?"

L.

Juan rejoin'd—"She was a Catholic,
And therefore fittest, as of his persuasion;
Since he was sure his mother would fall sick,
And the Pope thunder excommunication,
If——" But here Adeline, who seem'd to pique
Herself extremely on the inoculation
Of others with her own opinions, stated—
As usual—the same reason which she late did.

LI.

And wherefore not? A reasonable reason,
If good, is none the worse for repetition;
If bad, the best way's certainly to tease on,
And amplify: you lose much by concision,
Whereas insisting in or out of season
Convinces all men, even a politician;
Or—what is just the same—it wearies out.
So the end's gain'd, what signifies the route?

LII.

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice—
For prejudice it was—against a creature
As pure as sanctity itself from vice,
With all the added charm of form and feature,
For me appears a question far too nice,
Since Adeline was liberal by nature;
But nature's nature, and has more caprices
Than I have time, or will, to take to pieces.

LIII.

Perhaps she did not like the quiet way
With which Aurora on those baubles look'd,
Which charm most people in their earlier day:
For there are few things by mankind less brook'd,
And womankind too, if we so may say,
Than finding thus their genius stand rebuked,
Like "Anthony's by Cæsar," by the few
Who look upon them as they ought to do.

LIV.

It was not envy—Adeline had none;
Her place was far beyond it, and her mind.
It was not scorn—which could not light on one
Whose greatest *fault* was leaving few to find.
It was not jealousy, I think: but shun
Following the “*ignes fatui*” of mankind.
It was not—but ’tis easier far, alas!
To say what it was not than what it was.

LV.

Little Aurora deem’d she was the theme
Of such discussion. She was there a guest;
A beauteous ripple of the brilliant stream
Of rank and youth, though purer than the rest,
Which flow’d on for a moment in the beam
Time sheds a moment o’er each sparkling crest.
Had she known this, she would have calmly smiled—
She had so much, or little, of the child.

LVI.

The dashing and proud air of Adeline
Imposed not upon her: she saw her blaze
Much as she would have seen a glow-worm shine,
Then turn’d unto the stars for loftier rays.
Juan was something she could not divine,
Being no sibyl in the new world’s ways;
Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
Because she did not pin her faith on feature.

LVII.

His fame, too,—for he had that kind of fame
Which sometimes plays the deuce with womankind,
A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame;
Half virtues and whole vices being combined;
Faults which attract because they are not tame;
Follies trick'd out so brightly that they blind:—
These seals upon her wax made no impression,
Such was her coldness or her self-possession.

LVIII.

Juan knew nought of such a character—
High, yet resembling not his lost Haidée;
Yet each was radiant in her proper sphere:
The island girl, bred up by the lone sea,
More warm, as lovely, and not less sincere,
Was Nature's all: Aurora could not be,
Nor would be thus:—the difference in them
Was such as lies between a flower and gem.

LIX.

Having wound up with this sublime comparison,
Methinks we may proceed upon our narrative,
And, as my friend Scott says, "I sound my warison;"
Scott, the superlative of my comparative—
Scott, who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen,
Serf, lord, man, with such skill as none would share
it, if
There had not been one Shakspeare and Voltaire,
Of one or both of whom he seems the heir.

LX.

I say, in my slight way I may proceed
To play upon the surface of humanity.
I write the world, nor care if the world read,
At least for this I cannot spare its vanity.
My Muse hath bred, and still perhaps may breed
More foes by this same scroll: when I began it, I
Thought that it might turn out so—*now* I *know* it,
But still I am, or was, a pretty poet.

LXI.

The conference or congress (for it ended
As congresses of late do) of the Lady
Adeline and Don Juan rather blended
Some acids with the sweets—for she was heady;
But, ere the matter could be marr'd or mended,
The silvery bell rang, not for “dinner ready,”
But for that hour, call’d *half-hour*, given to dress,
Though ladies’ robes seem scant enough for less.

LXII.

Great things were now to be achieved at table,
With massy plate for armour, knives and forks
For weapons; but what Muse since Homer’s able
(His feasts are not the worst part of his works)
To draw up in array a single day-bill
Of modern dinners? where more mystery lurks
In soups or sauces, or a sole ragoût,
Than witches, b—ches, or physicians, brew.

LXIII.

There was a goodly "*soupe à la bonne femme*," [too
Though God knows whence it came from; there was
A turbot for relief of those who cram,

Relieved with "*dindon à la Parigieux*;"
There also was—the sinner that I am!

How shall I get this gourmand stanza through?—
"*Soupe à la Beauveau*," whose relief was dory,
Relieved itself by pork, for greater glory.

LXIV.

But I must crowd all into one grand mess
Or mass; for should I stretch into detail,
My Muse would run much more into excess,
Than when some squeamish people deem her frail.
But though a "*bonne vivante*," I must confess
Her stomach's not her peccant part; this tale
However doth require some slight refection,
Just to relieve her spirits from dejection.

LXV.

Fowls "*à la Condé*," slices eke of salmon,
With "*saucés Gênévoises*," and haunch of venison;
Wine to which might again have slain young Ammon—
A man like whom I hope we sha'n't see many soon;
They also set a glazed Westphalian ham on,
Whereon Apicius would bestow his benison;
And then there was champagne with foaming whirls,
As white as Cleopatra's melted pearls.

LXVI.

Then there was God knows what "à l'Allemande,"
"A l'Espagnole," "timballe," and "salpicon"—
With things I can't withstand or understand,
Though swallow'd with much zest upon the whole;
And "entremets" to piddle with at hand,
Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;
While great Lucullus' (*Robe triumphal*) muffles—
(*There's fame*)—young partridge fillets, deck'd with
truffles.⁽⁴⁾

LXVII.

What are the *fillets* on the victor's brow
To these? They are rags or dust. Where is the arch
Which nodded to the nation's spoils below?
Where the triumphal chariots' haughty march?
Gone to where victories must like dinners go.
Farther I shall not follow the research:
But oh! ye modern heroes with your cartridges,
When will your names lend lustre e'en to partridges?

LXVIII.

Those truffles too are no bad accessories,
Follow'd by "petits puits d'amour"—a dish
Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,
So every one may dress it to his wish,
According to the best of dictionaries,
Which encyclopedize both flesh and fish;
But even sans "confitures," it no less true is,
There's pretty picking in those "petits puits."⁽⁵⁾

LXIX.

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
Of intellect expended on two courses;
And indigestion's grand multiplication
Requires arithmetic beyond my forces.
Who would suppose, from Adam's simple ration,
That cookery could have call'd forth such resources,
As form a science and a nomenclature
From out the commonest demands of nature?

LXX.

The glasses jingled, and the palates tingled;
The diners of celebrity dined well;
The ladies with more moderation mingled
In the feast, pecking less than I can tell;
Also the younger men too: for a springald
Can't, like ripe age, in gormandize excel,
But thinks less of good eating than the whisper
(When seated next him) of some pretty lisper.

LXXI.

Alas! I must leave undescribed the gibier,
The salmi, the consommé, the purée,
All which I use to make my rhymes run glibber
Than could roast beef in our rough John Bull way:
I must not introduce even a spare rib here,
"Bubble and squeak" would spoil my liquid lay:
But I have dined, and must forego, alas!
The chaste description even of a "bécasse;"

LXXII.

And fruits, and ice, and all that art refines
From nature for the service of the goût—
Taste or the *gout*,—pronounce it as inclines
Your stomach! Ere you dine, the French will do;
But *after*, there are sometimes certain signs
Which prove plain English truer of the two.
Hast ever *had* the *gout*? I have not had it—
But I may have, and you too, reader, dread it.

LXXIII.

The simple olives, best allies of wine,
Must I pass over in my bill of fare?
I must, although a favourite “plat” of mine
In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, every where:
On them and bread ’twas oft my luck to dine,
The grass my table-cloth, in open air,
On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,
Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

LXXIV.

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
And vegetables, all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their roll,
But various as the various meats display’d:
Don Juan sat next an “à l’Espagnole”—
No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said;
But so far like a lady, that ’twas drest
Superbly, and contain’d a world of zest.

LXXV.

By some odd chance too he was placed between
Aurora and the Lady Adeline—
A situation difficult, I ween,
For man therein, with eyes and heart, to dine.
Also the conference which we have seen
Was not such as to encourage him to shine;
For Adeline, addressing few words to him,
With two transcendent eyes seem'd to look through him.

LXXVI.

I sometimes almost think that eyes have ears:
This much is sure, that, out of earshot, things
Are somehow echoed to the pretty dears,
Of which I can't tell whence their knowledge springs;
Like that same mystic music of the spheres,
Which no one hears so loudly though it rings.
'Tis wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues which pass'd without a word!

LXXVII.

Aurora sat with that indifference
Which piques a preux chevalier—as it ought:
Of all offences that's the worst offence,
Which seems to hint you are not worth a thought.
Now Juan, though no coxcomb in pretence,
Was not exactly pleased to be so caught;
Like a good ship entangled among ice,
And after so much excellent advice.

LXXVIII.

To his gay nothings, nothing was replied,
Or something which was nothing, as urbanity
Required. Aurora scarcely look'd aside,
Nor even smiled enough for any vanity.
The devil was in the girl! Could it be pride?
Or modesty, or absence, or inanity?
Heaven knows! But Adeline's malicious eyes
Sparkled with her successful prophecies,

LXXIX.

And look'd as much as if to say, "I said it;"—
A kind of triumph I'll not recommend,
Because it sometimes, as I have seen or read it,
Both in the case of lover and of friend,
Will pique a gentleman, for his own credit,
To bring what was a jest to a serious end:
For all men prophesy what *is* or *was*,
And hate those who won't let them come to pass.

LXXX.

Juan was drawn thus into some attentions,
Slight but select, and just enough to express,
To females of perspicuous comprehensions,
That he would rather make them more than less.
Aurora at the last (so history mentions,
Though probably much less a fact than guess)
So far relax'd her thoughts from their sweet prison,
As once or twice to smile, if not to listen.

LXXXI.

From answering she began to question: this

With her was rare; and Adeline, who as yet
Thought her predictions went not much amiss,

Began to dread she'd thaw to a coquette—
So very difficult, they say, it is

To keep extremes from meeting, when once set
In motion; but she here too much refined—
Aurora's spirit was not of that kind.

LXXXII.

But Juan had a sort of winning way,

A proud humility, if such there be,
Which show'd such deference to what females say,
As if each charming word were a decree.

His tact too temper'd him from grave to gay,

And taught him when to be reserved or free:

He had the art of drawing people out,
Without their seeing what he was about.

LXXXIII.

Aurora, who in her indifference

Confounded him in common with the crowd
Of flatterers, though she deem'd he had more sense
Than whispering foplings, or than witlings loud—
Commenced (from such slight things will great com-
mence)

To feel that flattery which attracts the proud
Rather by deference than compliment,
And wins even by a delicate dissent.

LXXXIV.

And then he had good looks;—that point was carried

Nem. con. amongst the women, which I grieve
To say leads oft to *crim. con.* with the married—

A case which to the juries we may leave,
Since with digressions we too long have tarried.

Now though we know of old that looks deceive,
And always have done, somehow these good looks
Make more impression than the best of books.

LXXXV.

Aurora, who look'd more on books than faces,

Was very young, although so very sage,
Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,

Especially upon a printed page:
But Virtue's self, with all her tightest laces,

Has not the natural stays of strict old age;
And Socrates, that model of all duty,
Own'd to a penchant, though discreet, for beauty.

LXXXVI.

And girls of sixteen are thus far Socratic,

But innocently so, as Socrates;
And really, if the sage sublime and Attic

At seventy years had phantasies like these,
Which Plato in his dialogues dramatic

Has shown, I know not why they should displease
In virgins—always in a modest way,
Observe; for that with me's a “*sine quâ*.”⁽⁶⁾

LXXXVII.

Also observe, that, like the great Lord Coke
(See Littleton), whene'er I have express'd
Opinions two, which at first sight may look
Twin opposites, the second is the best.
Perhaps I have a third too in a nook,
Or none at all—which seems a sorry jest:
But if a writer should be quite consistent,
How could he possibly show things existent?

LXXXVIII.

If people contradict themselves, can I
Help contradicting them, and every body,
Even my veracious self?—But that's a lie;
I never did so, never will—how should I?
He who doubts all things, nothing can deny: [muddy,
Truth's fountains may be clear—her streams are
And cut through such canals of contradiction,
That she must often navigate o'er fiction.

LXXXIX.

Apologue, fable, poesy, and parable,
Are false, but may be render'd also true
By those who sow them in a land that's arable.
'Tis wonderful what fable will not do!
'Tis said it makes reality more bearable:
But what's reality? Who has its clue?
Philosophy? No: she too much rejects.
Religion? *Yes*; but which of all her sects?

XC.

Some millions must be wrong, that's pretty clear;
Perhaps it may turn out that all were right.
God help us! Since we have need on our career
To keep our holy beacons always bright,
'Tis time that some new prophet should appear,
Or old indulge man with a second sight.
Opinions wear out in some thousand years,
Without a small refreshment from the spheres.

XCI.

But here again, why will I thus entangle
Myself with metaphysics? None can hate
So much as I do any kind of wrangle;
And yet, such is my folly, or my fate,
I always knock my head against some angle
About the present, past, or future state:
Yet I wish well to Trojan and to Tyrian,
For I was bred a moderate Presbyterian.

XCII.

But though I am a temperate theologian,
And also meek as a metaphysician,
Impartial between Tyrian and Trojan,
As Eldon on a lunatic commission,—
In politics my duty is to show John
Bull something of the lower world's condition.
It makes my blood boil like the springs of Hecla,
To see men let these scoundrel sovereigns break law.

XCIII.

But politics, and policy, and piety,
Are topics which I sometimes introduce,
Not only for the sake of their variety,
But as subservient to a moral use;
Because my business is to *dress* society,
And stuff with *sage* that very verdant goose.
And now, that we may furnish with some matter all
Tastes, we are going to try the supernatural.

XCIV.

And now I will give up all argument;
And positively henceforth no temptation
Shall "fool me to the top up of my bent:"—
Yes, I'll begin a thorough reformation.
Indeed I never knew what people meant
By deeming that my Muse's conversation
Was dangerous;—I think she is as harmless
As some who labour more and yet may charm less.

XCV.

Grim reader! did you ever see a ghost?
No; but you have heard—I understand—be dumb!
And don't regret the time you may have lost,
For you have got that pleasure still to come:
And do not think I mean to sneer at most
Of these things, or by ridicule benumb
That source of the sublime and the mysterious:—
For certain reasons, my belief is serious.

XCVI.

Serious? You laugh;—you may: that will I not;
My smiles must be sincere or not at all.
I say I do believe a haunted spot
Exists—and where? That shall I not recall,
Because I'd rather it should be forgot,
“Shadows the soul of Richard” may appal.
In short, upon that subject I've some qualms very
Like those of the philosopher of Malmsbury.⁽⁷⁾

XCVII.

The night (I sing by night—sometimes an owl,
And now and then a nightingale)—is dim,
And the loud shriek of sage Minerva's fowl
Rattles around me her discordant hymn:
Old portraits from old walls upon me scowl—
I wish to heaven they would not look so grim;
The dying embers dwindle in the grate—
I think too that I have sate up too late:

XCVIII.

And therefore, though 'tis by no means my way
To rhyme at noon—when I have other things
To think of, if I ever think—I say
I feel some chilly midnight shudderings,
And prudently postpone, until mid-day,
Treating a topic which, alas! but brings
Shadows;—but you must be in my condition
Before you learn to call this superstition.

XCIX.

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of empires heave but like some passing waves.

*This sublime stanza is in the style of
Manfred, and worthy of a place there!*

NOTES TO CANTO XV.

Note I, page 295, stanza xviii.

*And thou, Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken.*

As it is necessary in these times to avoid ambiguity, I say that I mean, by "Diviner still," CHRIST. If ever God was Man—or Man God—he was *both*. I never arraigned his creed, but the use—or abuse—made of it. Mr. Canning one day quoted Christianity to sanction negro slavery, and Mr. Wilberforce had little to say in reply. And was Christ crucified that black men might be scourged? If so, he had better been born a Mulatto, to give both colours an equal chance of freedom, or at least salvation.

Note 2, page 300, stanza xxxv.

*When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd marriage
In his harmonious settlement.*

This extraordinary and flourishing German colony in America does not entirely exclude matrimony, as the "Shakers" do; but lays such restrictions upon it as prevent more than a certain quantum of births within a certain number of years; which births (as Mr. Hulme observes) generally arrive "in a little flock like those of a farmer's lambs, all within the same month perhaps." These Harmonists (so called from the name of their settlement) are represented as a remarkably flourishing, pious, and quiet people. See the various recent writers on America.

Note 3, page 301, stanza xxxviii.

*'Tis not my purpose on his views to dwell,
Nor canvass what "so eminent a hand" meant.*

Jacob Tonson, according to Mr. Pope, was accustomed to call his writers "able pens," "persons of honour," and especially "eminent hands." Vide Correspondence, &c. &c.

Note 4, page 311, stanza lxvi.

*While great Lucullus (Rohe triumphal) muffles—
(There's fame)—young partridge fillets, deck'd with truffles.*

A dish “à la Lucullus.” This hero, who conquered the East, has left his more extended celebrity to the transplantation of cherries (which he first brought into Europe) and the nomenclature of some very good dishes;—and I am not sure that (barling indigestion) he has not done more service to mankind by his cookery than by his conquests. A cherry-tree may weigh against a bloody laurel: besides, he has contrived to earn celebrity from both.

Note 5, page 311, stanza lxviii.

*But even sans “confitures,” it no less true is,
There's pretty picking in those “petits puits.”*

“Petits puits d'amour garnis des confitures,” a classical and well-known dish for part of the flank of a second course.

Note 6, page 317, stanza lxxxvi.

..... *for that with me's a “sine quâ.”*

Subauditur “*Non* ;” omitted for the sake of euphony.

Note 7, page 321, stanza xcvi.

*In short, upon that subject I've some qualms very
Like those of the philosopher of Malmsbury.*

Hobbes; who, doubting of his own soul, paid that compliment to the souls of other people as to decline their visits, of which he had some apprehension.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XVI.

I.

THE antique Persians taught three useful things,
To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth.
This was the mode of Cyrus, best of kings—
A mode adopted since by modern youth.
Bows have they, generally with two strings;
Horses they ride without remorse or ruth;
At speaking truth perhaps they are less clever,
But draw the long bow better now than ever.

II.

The cause of this effect, or this defect,—
“For this effect defective comes by cause,”—
Is what I have not leisure to inspect;
But this I must say in my own applause,
Of all the Muses that I recollect,
Whate’er may be her follies or her flaws
In some things, mine’s beyond all contradiction
The most sincere that ever dealt in fiction.

III.

And as she treats all things, and ne'er retreats
From any thing, this epic will contain
A wilderness of the most rare conceits,
Which you might elsewhere hope to find in vain.
'Tis true there be some bitters with the sweets,
Yet mix'd so slightly that you can't complain,
But wonder they so few are, since my tale is
"De rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis."

IV.

But of all truths which she has told, the most
True is that which she is about to tell.
I said it was a story of a ghost—
What then? I only know it so befell.
Have you explored the limits of the coast,
Where all the dwellers of the earth must dwell?
'Tis time to strike such puny doubters dumb as
The sceptics who would not believe Columbus.

V.

Some people would impose now with authority,
Turpin's or Monmouth Geoffry's Chronicle;
Men whose historical superiority
Is always greatest at a miracle.
But Saint Augustine has the great priority,
Who bids all men believe the impossible,
Because 'tis so. Who nibble, scribble, quibble, he
Quiets at once with "*quia impossibile.*"

VI.

And therefore, mortals, cavil not at all;

Believe:—if 'tis improbable, you *must*;

And if it is impossible, you *shall*:

'Tis always best to take things upon trust.

I do not speak profanely, to recall

Those holier mysteries which the wise and just
Receive as gospel, and which grow more rooted,
As all truths must, the more they are disputed.

VII.

I merely mean to say what Johnson said,

That in the course of some six thousand years,
All nations have believed that from the dead

A visitant at intervals appears;

And what is strangest upon this strange head,

Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will.

VIII.

The dinner and the soirée too were done,

The supper too discuss'd, the dames admired,
The banqueteers had dropp'd off one by one—

The song was silent, and the dance expired:
The last thin petticoats were vanish'd, gone

Like fleecy clouds into the sky retired,
And nothing brighter gleam'd through the saloon
Than dying tapers—and the peeping moon.

IX.

The evaporation of a joyous day
Is like the last glass of champagne, without
The foam which made its virgin bumper gay;
Or like a system coupled with a doubt;
Or like a soda bottle when its spray
Has sparkled and let half its spirit out;
Or like a billow left by storms behind,
Without the animation of the wind;

X.

Or like an opiate which brings troubled rest,
Or none; or like—like nothing that I know
Except itself;—such is the human breast;
A thing, of which similitudes can show
No real likeness,—like the old Tyrian vest
Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.⁽¹⁾
So perish every tyrant's robe piece-meal!

XI.

But next to dressing for a rout or ball,
Undressing is a woe; our robe de chambre
May sit like that of Nessus, and recall
Thoughts quite as yellow, but less clear than amber.
Titus exclaim'd "I've lost a day!" Of all
The nights and days most people can remember
(I have had of both, some not to be disdain'd),
I wish they'd state how many they have gain'd.

XII.

And Juan, on retiring for the night,
Felt restless, and perplex'd, and compromised:
He thought Aurora Raby's eyes more bright
Than Adeline (such is advice) advised;
If he had known exactly his own plight,
He probably would have philosophised;
A great resource to all, and ne'er denied
Till wanted; therefore Juan only sigh'd.

XIII.

He sigh'd;—the next resource is the full moon,
Where all sighs are deposited; and now
It happen'd luckily, the chaste orb shone
As clear as such a climate will allow;
And Juan's mind was in the proper tone
To hail her with the apostrophe—"O thou!"
Of amatory egotism the *Tuism*;
Which further to explain would be a truism.

XIV.

But lover, poet, or astronomer,
Shepherd, or swain, whoever may behold,
Feel some abstraction when they gaze on her:
Great thoughts we catch from thence (besides a cold
Sometimes, unless my feelings rather err);
Deep secrets to her rolling light are told;
The ocean's tides and mortals' brains she sways,
And also hearts, if there be truth in lays.

XV.

Juan felt somewhat pensive, and disposed
For contemplation rather than his pillow:
The Gothic chamber, where he was enclosed,
Let in the rippling sound of the lake's billow,
With all the mystery by midnight caused:
Below his window waved (of course) a willow;
And he stood gazing out on the cascade
That flash'd and after darken'd in the shade.

XVI.

Upon his table or his toilet,—*which*
Of these is not exactly ascertain'd—
(I state this, for I am cautious to a pitch
Of nicety, where a fact is to be gain'd)
A lamp burn'd high, while he leant from a niche,
Where many a Gothic ornament remain'd,
In chisell'd stone and painted glass, and all
That time has left our fathers of their hall.

XVII.

Then, as the night was clear though cold, he threw
His chamber door wide open—and went forth
Into a gallery, of a sombre hue,
Long, furnish'd with old pictures of great worth,
Of knights and dames heroic and chaste too,
As doubtless should be people of high birth.
But by dim lights the portraits of the dead
Have something ghastly, desolate, and dread.

XVIII.

The forms of the grim knight and pictured saint
Look living in the moon; and as you turn
Backward and forward to the echoes faint
Of your own footsteps—voices from the urn
Appear to wake, and shadows wild and quaint
Start from the frames which fence their aspects stern,
As if to ask how you can dare to keep
A vigil there, where all but death should sleep.

XIX.

And the pale smile of beauties in the grave,
The charms of other days, in starlight gleams,
Glimmer on high; their buried locks still wave
Along the canvas; their eyes glance like dreams
On ours, or spars within some dusky cave,
But death is imaged in their shadowy beams.
A picture is the past; even ere its frame
Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.

XX.

As Juan mused on mutability,
Or on his mistress—terms synonymous—
No sound except the echo of his sigh
Or step ran sadly through that antique house;
When suddenly he heard, or thought so, nigh,
A supernatural agent—or a mouse,
Whose little nibbling rustle will embarrass
Most people as it plays along the arras.

XXI.

It was no mouse, but lo! a monk, array'd
In cowl and beads, and dusky garb, appear'd,
Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard;
His garments only a slight murmur made;
He moved as shadowy as the sisters weird,
But slowly; and as he passed Juan by,
Glanced, without pausing, on him a bright eye.

XXII.

Juan was petrified; he had heard a hint
Of such a spirit in these halls of old,
But thought, like most men, there was nothing in't
Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold,
Coin'd from surviving superstition's mint,
Which passes ghosts in currency like gold,
But rarely seen, like gold compared with paper.
And *did* he see this? or was it a vapour?

XXIII.

Once, twice, thrice pass'd, repass'd—the thing of air,
Or earth beneath, or heaven, or t'other place;
And Juan gazed upon it with a stare,
Yet could not speak or move; but, on its base
As stands a statue, stood: he felt his hair
Twine like a knot of snakes around his face;
He tax'd his tongue for words, which were not granted,
To ask the reverend person what he wanted.

XXIV.

The third time, after a still longer pause,
The shadow pass'd away—but where? the hall
Was long, and thus far there was no great cause
To think his vanishing unnatural:
Doors there were many, through which, by the laws
Of physics, bodies whether short or tall
Might come or go; but Juan could not state
Through which the spectre seem'd to evaporate.

XXV.

He stood—how long he knew not, but it seem'd
An age—expectant, powerless, with his eyes
Strain'd on the spot where first the figure gleam'd;
Then by degrees recall'd his energies,
And would have pass'd the whole off as a dream,
But could not wake; he was, he did surmise,
Waking already, and return'd at length
Back to his chamber, shorn of half his strength.

XXVI.

All there was as he left it: still his taper
Burnt, and not *blue*, as modest tapers use,
Receiving sprites with sympathetic vapour;
He rubb'd his eyes, and they did not refuse
Their office; he took up an old newspaper;
The paper was right easy to peruse;
He read an article the king attacking,
And a long eulogy of “patent blacking.”

XXVII.

This savour'd of this world; but his hand shook—

He shut his door, and after having read
A paragraph, I think about Horne Tooke,
Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed.
There, couch'd all snugly on his pillow's nook,
With what he had seen his phantasy he fed;
And though it was no opiate, slumber crept
Upon him by degrees, and so he slept.

XXVIII.

He woke betimes; and, as may be supposed,
Ponder'd upon his visitant or vision,
And whether it ought not to be disclosed,
At risk of being quizz'd for superstition.
The more he thought, the more his mind was posed:
In the mean time, his valet, whose precision
Was great, because his master brook'd no less,
Knock'd to inform him it was time to dress.

XXIX.

He dress'd; and like young people he was wont
To take some trouble with his toilet, but
This morning rather spent less time upon't;
Aside his very mirror soon was put;
His curls fell negligently o'er his front,
His clothes were not curb'd to their usual cut,
His very neckcloth's Gordian knot was tied
Almost an hair's breadth too much on one side.

XXX.

And when he walk'd down into the saloon,
He sate him pensive o'er a dish of tea,
Which he perhaps had not discover'd soon,
Had it not happen'd scalding hot to be,
Which made him have recourse unto his spoon;
So much distrait he was, that all could see
That something was the matter—Adeline
The first—but *what* she could not well divine.

XXXI.

She look'd, and saw him pale, and turn'd as pale
Herself; then hastily look'd down, and mutter'd
Something, but what's not stated in my tale.
Lord Henry said, his muffin was ill butter'd;
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke play'd with her veil,
And look'd at Juan hard, but nothing utter'd.
Aurora Raby with her large dark eyes
Survey'd him with a kind of calm surprise.

XXXII.

But seeing him all cold and silent still,
And every body wondering more or less,
Fair Adeline inquired, "If he were ill?"
He started, and said, "Yes—no—rather—yes."
The family physician had great skill,
And being present, now began to express
His readiness to feel his pulse and tell
The cause, but Juan said, "He was quite well."

XXXIII.

“Quite well; yes, no.”—These answers were mysterious,
And yet his looks appear’d to sanction both,
However they might savour of delirious;
Something like illness of a sudden growth
Weigh’d on his spirit, though by no means serious:
But for the rest, as he himself seem’d loth
To state the case, it might be ta’en for granted
It was not the physician that he wanted.

XXXIV.

Lord Henry, who had now discuss’d his chocolate,
Also the muffin whereof he complain’d,
Said, Juan had not got his usual look elate,
At which he marvell’d, since it had not rain’d;
Then ask’d her grace what news were of the duke of late?
Her grace replied, *his* grace was rather pain’d
With some slight, light, hereditary twinges
Of gout, which rusts aristocratic hinges.

XXXV.

Then Henry turn’d to Juan, and address’d
A few words of condolence on his state:
“You look,” quoth he, “as if you had had your rest
Broke in upon by the Black Friar of late.”
“What friar?” said Juan; and he did his best
To put the question with an air sedate,
Or careless; but the effort was not valid
To hinder him from growing still more pallid.

XXXVI.

"Oh! have you never heard of the Black Friar?
The spirit of these walls?"—"In truth not I."
"Why Fame—but Fame you know 's sometimes a liar—
Tells an odd story, of which by the bye:
Whether with time the spectre has grown shyer,
Or that our sires had a more gifted eye
For such sights, though the tale is half believed,
The friar of late has not been oft perceived.

XXXVII.

"The last time was——" "I pray," said Adeline—
(Who watch'd the changes of Don Juan's brow,
And from its context thought she could divine
Connexions stronger than he chose to avow
With this same legend)—"if you but design
To jest, you'll choose some other theme just now,
Because the present tale has oft been told,
And is not much improved by growing old."

XXXVIII.

"Jest!" quoth Milor, "why, Adeline, you know
That we ourselves—'twas in the honey moon—
Saw——" "Well, no matter, 'twas so long ago;
But, come, I'll set your story to a tune."
Graceful as Dian, when she draws her bow,
She seized her harp, whose strings were kindled soon
As touch'd, and plaintively began to play
The air of "'Twas a Friar of Orders Gray."

XXXIX.

“But add the words,” cried Henry, “which you made;
For Adeline is half a poetess,”
Turning round to the rest, he smiling said.
Of course the others could not but express
In courtesy their wish to see display’d
By one *three* talents, for there were no less—
The voice, the words, the harper’s skill, at once
Could hardly be united by a dunce.

XL.

After some fascinating hesitation,—
The charming of these charmers, who seem bound,
I can’t tell why, to this dissimulation,—
Fair Adeline, with eyes fix’d on the ground
At first, then kindling into animation,
Added her sweet voice to the lyric sound,
And sang with much simplicity,—a merit
Not the less precious, that we seldom hear it.

I.

Beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
Who sitteth by Norman stone,
For he mutters his prayer in the midnight air,
And his mass of the days that are gone.
When the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville,
Made Norman Church his prey,
And expell’d the friars, one friar still
Would not be driven away.

2.

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,
To turn church lands to lay,
With sword in hand, and torch to light
Their walls, if they said nay;
A monk remain'd, unchased, unchain'd,
And he did not seem form'd of clay,
For he's seen in the porch, and he's seen in the church,
Though he is not seen by day.

3.

And whether for good, or whether for ill,
It is not mine to say;
But still to the house of Amundeville
He abideth night and day.
By the marriage-bed of their lords, 'tis said,
He flits on the bridal eve;
And 'tis held as faith, to their bed of death
He comes—but not to grieve.

4.

When an heir is born, he's heard to mourn,
And when aught is to befall
That ancient line, in the pale moonshine
He walks from hall to hall.
His form you may trace, but not his face,
'Tis shadow'd by his cowl;
But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
And they seem of a parted soul.

5.

But beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
He still retains his sway,
For he is yet the church's heir
Whoever may be the lay.
Amundeville is lord by day,
But the monk is lord by night;
Nor wine nor wassail could raise a vassal
To question that friar's right.

6.

Say nought to him as he walks the hall,
And he'll say nought to you;
He sweeps along in his dusky pall,
As o'er the grass the dew.
Then grammercy! for the Black Friar;
Heaven sain him! fair or foul,
And whatsoe'er may be his prayer,
Let ours be for his soul.

XLI.

The lady's voice ceased, and the thrilling wires
Died from the touch that kindled them to sound;
And the pause follow'd, which when song expires
Pervades a moment those who listen round;
And then of course the circle much admires,
Nor less applauds, as in politeness bound,
The tones, the feeling, and the execution,
To the performer's diffident confusion.

XLII.

Fair Adeline, though in a careless way,
As if she rated such accomplishment
As the mere pastime of an idle day,
Pursued an instant for her own content,
Would now and then as 'twere *without* display,
Yet *with* display in fact, at times relent
To such performances with haughty smile,
To show she *could*, if it were worth her while.

XLIII.

Now this (but we will whisper it aside)
Was—pardon the pedantic illustration—
Trampling on Plato's pride with greater pride,
As did the Cynic on some like occasion;
Deeming the sage would be much mortified,
Or thrown into a philosophic passion,
For a spoilt carpet—but the “Attic Bee”
Was much consoled by his own repartee.⁽²⁾

XLIV.

Thus Adeline would throw into the shade
(By doing easily whene'er she chose,
What dilettanti do with vast parade)
Their sort of *half profession*; for it grows
To something like this when too oft display'd;
And that it is so, every body knows,
Who have heard Miss That or This, or Lady T'other,
Show off—to please their company or mother.

XLV.

Oh! the long evenings of duets and trios!
The admirations and the speculations;
The "Mamma Mia's!" and the "Amor Mio's!"
The "Tanti palpiti's" on such occasions:
The "Lasciami's," and quavering "Addio's!"
Amongst our own most musical of nations;
With "Tu mi chamas's" from Portingale,
To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail. (3)

XLVI.

In Babylon's bravuras—as the home
Heart-ballads of Green Erin or Gray Highlands,
That bring Lochaber back to eyes that roam
O'er far Atlantic continents or islands,
The calentures of music which o'ercome [lands,
All mountaineers with dreams that they are nigh
No more to be beheld but in such visions—
Was Adeline well versed, as compositions.

XLVII.

She also had a twilight tinge of "*Blue*," [wrote;
Could write rhymes, and compose more than she
Made epigrams occasionally too
Upon her friends, as every body ought.
But still from that sublimer azure hue,
So much the present dye, she was remote;
Was weak enough to deem Pope a great poet,
And what was worse, was not ashamed to show it.

XLVIII.

Aurora—since we are touching upon taste,
Which now-a-days is the thermometer
By whose degrees all characters are class'd—
Was more Shakspearian, if I do not err.
The worlds beyond this world's perplexing waste
Had more of her existence, for in her
There was a depth of feeling to embrace
Thoughts, boundless, deep, but silent too as Space.

XLIX.

Not so her gracious, graceful, graceless grace,
The full-grown Hebe of Fitz-Fulke, whose mind,
If she had any, was upon her face,
And that was of a fascinating kind.
A little turn for mischief you might trace
Also thereon,—but that's not much; we find
Few females without some such gentle leaven,
For fear we should suppose us quite in heaven.

L.

I have not heard she was at all poetic,
Though once she was seen reading the "Bath Guide,"
And "Hayley's Triumphs," which she deem'd pathetic,
Because, she said, *her temper* had been tried
So much, the bard had really been prophetic
Of what she had gone through with—since a bride.
But of all verse, what most ensured her praise
Were sonnets to herself, or "bouts rimés."

LI.

'Twere difficult to say what was the object
Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay
To bear on what appear'd to her the subject
Of Juan's nervous feelings on that day.
Perhaps she merely had the simple project
To laugh him out of his supposed dismay;
Perhaps she might wish to confirm him in it,
Though why I cannot say—at least this minute.

LII.

But so far the immediate effect
Was to restore him to his self-propriety,
A thing quite necessary to the elect,
Who wish to take the tone of their society:
In which you cannot be too circumspect,
Whether the mode be persiflage or piety,
But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,
On pain of much displeasing the gynocracy.

LIII.

And therefore Juan now began to rally
His spirits, and without more explanation
To jest upon such themes in many a sally.
Her grace too also seized the same occasion,
With various similar remarks to tally,
But wish'd for a still more detail'd narration
Of this same mystic friar's curious doings,
About the present family's deaths and wooings.

LIV.

Of these few could say more than has been said;
They pass'd as such things do, for superstition
With some, while others, who had more in dread
The theme, half credited the strange tradition;
And much was talk'd on all sides on that head:

But Juan, when cross-question'd on the vision,
Which some supposed (though he had not avow'd it)
Had stirr'd him, answer'd in a way to cloud it.

LV.

And then, the mid-day having worn to one,

The company prepared to separate;
Some to their several pastimes, or to none,
Some wondering 'twas so early, some so late.

There was a goodly match too, to be run

Between some greyhounds on my lord's estate,
And a young race-horse of old pedigree,
Match'd for the spring, whom several went to see.

LVI.

There was a picture-dealer who had brought

A special Titian, warranted original,
So precious that it was not to be bought,

Though princes the possessor were besieging all.
The king himself had cheapen'd it, but thought

The civil list (he deigns to accept, obliging all
His subjects by his gracious acceptance)
Too scanty, in these times of low taxation.

LVII.

But as Lord Henry was a connoisseur,—
The friend of artists, if not arts,—the owner,
With motives the most classical and pure,
So that he would have been the very donor,
Rather than seller, had his wants been fewer,
So much he deem'd his patronage an honour,
Had brought the capo d'opera, not for sale,
But for his judgment—never known to fail.

LVIII.

There was a modern Goth, I mean a Gothic
Bricklayer of Babel, call'd an architect, [thick,
Brought to survey these gray walls, which though so
Might have from time acquired some slight defect;
Who after rummaging the Abbey through thick
And thin, produced a plan whereby to erect
New buildings of correctest conformation,
And throw down old, which he call'd *restoration*.

LIX.

The cost would be a trifle—an “old song,”
Set to some thousands ('tis the usual burden
Of that same tune, when people hum it long)—
The price would speedily repay its worth in
An edifice no less sublime than strong,
By which Lord Henry's good taste would go forth in
Its glory, through all ages shining sunny,
For Gothic daring shown in English money.⁽⁴⁾—

LX.

There were two lawyers busy on a mortgage
Lord Henry wish'd to raise for a new purchase;
Also a lawsuit upon tenures burgage,
And one on tithes, which sure are Discord's torches,
Kindling Religion till she throws down *her* gage,
"Untying" squires "to fight against the churches;"⁽⁵⁾
There was a prize ox, a prize pig, and ploughman,
For Henry was a sort of Sabine showman.

LXI.

There were two poachers caught in a steel trap,
Ready for jail, their place of convalescence;
There was a country girl in a close cap
And scarlet cloak (I hate the sight to see, since—
Since—since—in youth, I had the sad mishap—
But luckily I have paid few parish fees since):
That scarlet cloak, alas! unclosed with rigour,
Presents the problem of a double figure.

LXII.

A reel within a bottle is a mystery,
One can't tell how it e'er got in or out;
Therefore the present piece of natural history
I leave to those who are fond of solving doubt;
And merely state, though not for the consistory,
Lord Henry was a justice, and that Scout
The constable, beneath a warrant's banner,
Had bagg'd this poacher upon Nature's manor.

LXIII.

Now justices of peace must judge all pieces
Of mischief of all kinds, and keep the game
And morals of the country from caprices
Of those who have not a licence for the same;
And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,
Perhaps these are most difficult to tame:
Preserving partridges and pretty wenches
Are puzzles to the most precautionous benches.

LXIV.

The present culprit was extremely pale,
Pale as if painted so; her cheek being red
By nature, as in higher dames less hale
'Tis white, at least when they just rise from bed.
Perhaps she was ashamed of seeming frail,
Poor soul! for she was country born and bred,
And knew no better in her immorality
Than to wax white—for blushes are for quality.

LXV.

Her black, bright, downcast, yet espiègle eye,
Had gather'd a large tear into its corner,
Which the poor thing at times essay'd to dry,
For she was not a sentimental mourner,
Parading all her sensibility,
Nor insolent enough to scorn the scorner,
But stood in trembling, patient tribulation,
To be call'd up for her examination.

LXVI.

Of course these groups were scatter'd here and there,
Not nigh the gay saloon of ladies gent.
The lawyers in the study; and in air
The prize pig, ploughman, poachers; the men sent
From town, viz. architect and dealer, were
Both busy (as a general in his tent
Writing despatches) in their several stations,
Exulting in their brilliant lucubrations.

LXVII.

But this poor girl was left in the great hall,
While Scout, the parish guardian of the frail,
Discuss'd (he hated beer yclept the "small")
A mighty mug of *moral* double ale.
She waited until Justice could recall
Its kind attentions to their proper pale,
To name a thing in nomenclature rather
Perplexing for most virgins—a child's father.

LXVIII.

You see here was enough of occupation
For the Lord Henry, link'd with dogs and horses.
There was much bustle too and preparation
Below stairs on the score of second courses;
Because, as suits their rank and situation,
Those who in counties have great land resources
Have "public days," when all men may carouse,
Though not exactly what's called "open house."

LXIX.

But once a week or fortnight, *uninvited*
(Thus we translate a *general invitation*)
All country gentlemen, esquired or knighted,
May drop in without cards, and take their station
At the full board, and sit alike delighted
With fashionable wines and conversation;
And, as the isthmus of the grand connexion,
Talk o'er themselves, the past and next election.

LXX.

Lord Henry was a great electioneerer,
Burrowing for boroughs like a rat or rabbit.
But county contests cost him rather dearer,
Because the neighbouring Scotch Earl of Giftgabbit
Had English influence, in the self-same sphere here;
His son, the Honourable Dick Dicedrabbit,
Was member for the "other interest" (meaning
The same self-interest, with a different leaning).

LXXI.

Courteous and cautious therefore in his county,
He was all things to all men, and dispensed
To some civility, to others bounty,
And promises to all—which last commenced
To gather to a somewhat large amount, he
Not calculating how much they condensed;
But what with keeping some, and breaking others,
His word had the same value as another's.

LXXII.

A friend to freedom and freeholders—yet
No less a friend to government—he held,
That he exactly the just medium hit
'Twixt place and patriotism—albeit compell'd,
Such was his sovereign's pleasure (though unfit,
He added modestly, when rebels rail'd)
To hold some sinecures he wish'd abolish'd,
But that with them all law would be demolish'd.

LXXIII.

He was "free to confess"—(whence comes this phrase?
Is't English? No—'tis only parliamentary)
That innovation's spirit now-a-days
Had made more progress than for the last century.
He would not tread a factious path to praise,
Though for the public weal disposed to venture high;
As for his place, he could but say this of it,
That the fatigue was greater than the profit.

LXXIV.

Heaven, and his friends, knew that a private life
Had ever been his sole and whole ambition;
But could he quit his king in times of strife
Which threaten'd the whole country with perdition?
When demagogues would with a butcher's knife
Cut through and through (oh! damnable incision!)
The Gordian or the Geordi-an knot, whose strings
Have tied together commons, lords, and kings.

LXXV.

Sooner "come place into the civil list

And champion him to the utmost—"he would keep it,
Till duly disappointed or dismiss'd:

Profit he cared not for, let others reap it;

But should the day come when place ceased to exist,

The country would have far more cause to weep it:
For how could it go on? Explain who can!

|| *He* gloried in the name of Englishman.

LXXVI.

He was as independent—ay, much more—

Than those who were not paid for independence,
As common soldiers, or a common—shore,

Have in their several arts or parts ascendance
O'er the irregulars in lust or gore,

Who do not give professional attendance.

Thus on the mob all statesmen are as eager

To prove their pride, as footmen to a beggar.

LXXVII.

All this (save the last stanza) Henry said,

And thought. I say no more—I've said too much;
For all of us have either heard or read

Of—or *upon* the hustings—some slight such
Hints from the independent heart or head

Of the official candidate. I'll touch

No more on this—the dinner-bell hath rung,

And grace is said; the grace *I should have sung—*

LXXVIII.

But I'm too late, and therefore must make play.

'Twas a great banquet, such as Albion old
Was wont to boast—as if a glutton's tray

Were something very glorious to behold.

But 'twas a public feast and public day,—

Quite full, right dull, guests hot, and dishes cold,
Great plenty, much formality, small cheer,
And every body out of their own sphere.

LXXIX.

The squires familiarly formal, and

My lords and ladies proudly condescending;

The very servants puzzling how to hand

Their plates—without it might be too much bending
From their high places by the sideboard's stand—

Yet, like their masters, fearful of offending.

For any deviation from the graces

Might cost both men and master too—their *places*.

LXXX.

There were some hunters bold, and coursers keen,

Whose hounds ne'er err'd, nor greyhounds deign'd
Some deadly shots too, Septembrizers, seen [to lurch;

Earliest to rise, and last to quit the search
Of the poor partridge through his stubble screen.

There were some massy members of the church,
Takers of tithes, and makers of good matches,
And several who sung fewer psalms than catches.

LXXXI.

There were some country wags too—and, alas!
Some exiles from the town, who had been driven
To gaze, instead of pavement, upon grass,
And rise at nine in lieu of long eleven.
And lo! upon that day it came to pass,
I sate next that o'erwhelming son of heaven,
The very powerful parson, Peter Pith,
The loudest wit I e'er was deafen'd with.

LXXXII.

I knew him in his livelier London days,
A brilliant diner out, though but a curate;
And not a joke he cut but earn'd its praise,
Until preferment, coming at a sure rate,
(O Providence! how wondrous are thy ways,
Who would suppose thy gifts sometimes obdurate?)
Gave him, to lay the devil who looks o'er Lincoln,
A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

LXXXIII.

His jokes were sermons, and his sermons jokes;
But both were thrown away amongst the fens;
For wit hath no great friend in aguish folks.
No longer ready ears and short-hand pens
Imbided the gay bon mot, or happy hoax:
The poor priest was reduced to common sense,
Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
To hammer a hoarse laugh from the thick throng.

LXXXIV.

There *is* a difference, says the song, "between
A beggar and a queen," or *was* (of late
The latter worse used of the two we've seen—
But we'll say nothing of affairs of state)
A difference "twixt a bishop and a dean,"
A difference between crockery ware and plate,
As between English beef and Spartan broth—
And yet great heroes have been bred by both.

LXXXV.

But of all nature's discrepancies, none
Upon the whole is greater than the difference
Beheld between the country and the town,
Of which the latter merits every preference
From those who have few resources of their own,
And only think, or act, or feel, with reference
To some small plan of interest or ambition—
Both which are limited to no condition.

LXXXVI.

But "en avant!" The light loves languish o'er
Long banquets and too many guests, although
A slight repast makes people love much more,
Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know,
Even from our grammar upwards, friends of yore
With vivifying Venus, who doth owe
To these the invention of champagne and truffles:
Temperance delights her, but long fasting ruffles.

LXXXVII.

Dully past o'er the dinner of the day;
And Juan took his place, he knew not where,
Confused, in the confusion, and distraight,
And sitting as if nail'd upon his chair:
Though knives and forks clang'd round as in a fray,
He seem'd unconscious of all passing there,
Till some one, with a groan, exprest a wish
(Unheeded twice) to have a fin of fish.

LXXXVIII.

On which, at the *third* asking of the bans,
He started; and perceiving smiles around
Broadening to grins, he colour'd more than once,
And hastily—as nothing can confound
A wise man more than laughter from a dunce—
Inflicted on the dish a deadly wound,
And with such hurry, that ere he could curb it,
He had paid his neighbour's prayer with half a turbot.

LXXXIX.

This was no bad mistake, as it occur'd,
The supPLICATOR being an amateur;
But others, who were left with scarce a third,
Were angry—as they well might, to be sure.
They wonder'd how a young man so absurd
Lord Henry at his table should endure;
And this, and his not knowing how much oats
Had fallen last market, cost his host three votes.

XC.

They little knew, or might have sympathized,
That he the night before had seen a ghost,
A prologue which but slightly harmonized
With the substantial company engross'd
By matter, and so much materialized,
That one scarce knew at what to marvel most
Of two things—how (the question rather odd is)
Such bodies could have souls, or souls such bodies.

XCI.

But what confused him more than smile or stare
From all the 'squires and 'squiresses around,
Who wonder'd at the abstraction of his air,
Especially as he had been renown'd
For some vivacity among the fair,
Even in the country circle's narrow bound—
(For little things upon my lord's estate
Were good small talk for others still less great)—

XCII.

Was, that he caught Aurora's eye on his,
And something like a smile upon her cheek.
Now this he really rather took amiss:
In those who rarely smile, their smile bespeaks
A strong external motive; and in this
Smile of Aurora's there was nought to pique
Or hope, or love, with any of the wiles
Which some pretend to trace in ladies' smiles.

XCIII.

'Twas a mere quiet smile of contemplation,
Indicative of some surprise and pity;
And Juan grew carnation with vexation,
Which was not very wise, and still less witty,
Since he had gain'd at least her observation,
A most important outwork of the city—
As Juan should have known, had not his senses
By last night's ghost been driven from their defences.

XCIV.

But what was bad, she did not blush in turn,
Nor seem embarrass'd—quite the contrary;
Her aspect was as usual, still—*not* stern—
And she withdrew, but cast not down, her eye,
Yet grew a little pale—with what? concern?
I know not; but her colour ne'er was high—
Though sometimes faintly flush'd—and always clear,
As deep seas in a sunny atmosphere.

XCV.

But Adeline was occupied by fame
This day; and watching, witching, condescending
To the consumers of fish, fowl, and game,
And dignity with courtesy so blending,
As all must blend whose part it is to aim
(Especially as the sixth year is ending)
At their lord's, son's, or similar connexion's
Safe conduct through the rocks of re-elections.

XCVI.

Though this was most expedient on the whole,
And usual—Juan, when he cast a glance
On Adeline while playing her grand rôle,
Which she went through as though it were a dance,
Betraying only now and then her soul
By a look scarce perceptibly askance
(Of weariness or scorn), began to feel
Some doubt how much of Adeline was *real*;

XCVII.

So well she acted all and every part
By turns—with that vivacious versatility,
Which many people take for want of heart.
They err—'tis merely what is call'd mobility,⁽⁶⁾
A thing of temperament and not of art,
Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
And false—though true; for surely they're sincerest
Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.

XCVIII.

This makes your actors, artists, and romancers,
Heroes sometimes, though seldom—sages never;
But speakers, bards, diplomatists, and dancers,
Little that's great, but much of what is clever;
Most orators, but very few financiers,
Though all Exchequer chancellors endeavour,
Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's rigours,
And grow quite figurative with their figures.

XCIX.

The poets of arithmetic are they

Who, though they prove not two and two to be
Five, as they would do in a modest way,

Have plainly made it out that four are three,
Judging by what they take, and what they pay.

The Sinking Fund's unfathomable sea,
That most unliquidating liquid, leaves
The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives.

C.

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces,

The fair Fitz-Fulke seem'd very much at ease;
Though too well bred to quiz men to their faces,

Her laughing blue eyes with a glance could seize
The ridicules of people in all places—

That honey of your fashionable bees—
And store it up for mischievous enjoyment;
And this at present was her kind employment.

CI.

However, the day closed, as days must close;

The evening also waned—and coffee came.
Each carriage was announced, and ladies rose,
And curtsying off, as curtsies country dame,
Retired: with most unfashionable bows

Their docile esquires also did the same,
Delighted with their dinner and their host,
But with the Lady Adeline the most.

CII.

Some praised her beauty; others her great grace;
The warmth of her politeness, whose sincerity
Was obvious in each feature of her face,
Whose traits were radiant with the rays of verity.
Yes; *she* was truly worthy *her* high place!
No one could envy her deserved prosperity.
And then her dress—what beautiful simplicity
Draperyed her form with curious felicity!⁽⁷⁾

CIII.

Meanwhile sweet Adeline deserved their praises,
By an impartial indemnification
For all her past exertion and soft phrases,
In a most edifying conversation,
Which turn'd upon their late guests' miens and faces,
And families, even to the last relation;
Their hideous wives, their horrid selves and dresses,
And truculent distortion of their tresses.

CIV.

True, *she* said little—'twas the rest that broke
Forth into universal epigram;
But then 'twas to the purpose what she spoke:
Like Addison's "faint praise," so wont to damn,
Her own but served to set off every joke,
As music chimes in with a melodrame.
How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!
I ask but this of mine, to——*not* defend.

CV.

'There were but two exceptions to this keen
Skirmish of wits o'er the departed ; one,
Aurora, with her pure and placid mien ;
And Juan too, in general behind none
In gay remark on what he had heard or seen,
Sate silent now, his usual spirits gone :
In vain he heard the others rail or rally,
He would not join them in a single sally.

CVI.

'Tis true he saw Aurora look as though
She approved his silence ; she perhaps mistook
Its motive for that charity we owe
But seldom pay the absent, nor would look
Farther ; it might or it might not be so.
But Juan, sitting silent in his nook,
Observing little in his reverie,
Yet saw this much, which he was glad to see.

CVII.

The ghost at least had done him this much good,
In making him as silent as a ghost,
If in the circumstances which ensued
He gain'd esteem where it was worth the most.
And certainly Aurora had renew'd
In him some feelings he had lately lost
Or harden'd ; feelings which, perhaps ideal,
Are so divine, that I must deem them real :—

CVIII.

The love of higher things and better days;
The unbounded hope, and heavenly ignorance
Of what is call'd the world, and the world's ways;
The moments when we gather from a glance
More joy than from all future pride or praise,
Which kindle manhood, but can ne'er entrance
The heart in an existence of its own,
Of which another's bosom is the zone.

CIX.

Who would not sigh *Αἰ αἰ τὰν Κυθέρειαν!*
That *hath* a memory, or that *had* a heart?
Alas! *her* star must fade like that of Dian:
Ray fades on ray, as years on years depart.
Anacreon only had the soul to tie an
Unwithering myrtle round the unblunted dart
Of Eros: but though thou hast play'd us many tricks,
Still we respect thee, "Alma Venus Genetrix!"

CX.

And full of sentiments, sublime as billows
Heaving between this world and worlds beyond,
Don Juan, when the midnight hour of pillows
Arrived, retired to his; but to despond
Rather than rest. Instead of poppies, willows
Waved o'er his couch; he meditated, fond
Of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish sleep,
And make the worldling sneer, the youngling weep.

CXI.

The night was as before: he was undrest,
Saving his night-gown, which is an undress;
Completely "sans culotte," and without vest;
In short, he hardly could be clothed with less:
But apprehensive of his spectral guest,
He sate, with feelings awkward to express
(By those who have not had such visitations),
Expectant of the ghost's fresh operations.

CXII.

And not in vain he listen'd—Hush! what's that?
I see—I see—Ah, no!—'tis not—yet 'tis—
Ye powers! it is the—the—the—Pooh! the cat!
The devil may take that stealthy pace of his!
So like a spiritual pit-a-pat,
Or tiptoe of an amatory Miss,
Gliding the first time to a rendezvous,
And dreading the chaste echoes of her shoe.

CXIII.

Again—what is't? The wind? No, no,—this time
It is the sable friar as before,
With awful footsteps regular as rhyme,
Or (as rhymes may be in these days) much more.
Again, through shadows of the night sublime,
When deep sleep fell on men, and the world wore
The starry darkness round her like a girdle
Spangled with gems—the monk made his blood curdle.

CXIV.

A noise like to wet fingers drawn on glass, ^(s)

Which sets the teeth on edge; and a slight clatter
Like showers which on the midnight gusts will pass,
Sounding like very supernatural water,
Came over Juan's ear, which throbb'd, alas!

For immaterialism's a serious matter;
So that even those whose faith is the most great
In souls immortal, shun them tête-à-tête.

CXV.

Were his eyes open?—Yes! and his mouth too.

Surprise has this effect—to make one dumb,
Yet leave the gate which eloquence slips through
As wide as if a long speech were to come.

Nigh and more nigh the awful echoes drew,

Tremendous to a mortal tympanum:

His eyes were open, and (as was before
Stated) his mouth. What open'd next?—the door.

CXVI.

It open'd with a most infernal creak,

Like that of hell. “Lasciate ogni speranza
Voi che entrate!” The hinge seemed to speak,

Dreadful as Dante's rhima, or this stanza;
Or—but all words upon such themes are weak:

A single shade's sufficient to entrance a
Hero—for what is substance to a spirit?
Or how is't *matter* trembles to come near it?

CXVII.

The door flew wide, not swiftly,—but, as fly
The sea-gulls, with a steady, sober flight—
And then swung back; nor close—but stood awry,
Half letting in long shadows on the light,
Which still in Juan's candlesticks burn'd high,
For he had two, both tolerably bright,
And in the door-way, darkening darkness, stood
The sable friar in his solemn hood.

CXVIII.

Don Juan shook, as erst he had been shaken
The night before; but being sick of shaking,
He first inclined to think he had been mistaken;
And then to be ashamed of such mistaking;
His own internal ghost began to awaken
Within him, and to quell his corporal quaking—
Hinting that soul and body on the whole
Were odds against a disembodied soul.

CXIX.

And then his dread grew wrath, and his wrath fierce;
And he arose, advanced—the shade retreated;
But Juan, eager now the truth to pierce,
Follow'd, his veins no longer cold, but heated,
Resolved to thrust the mystery carte and tierce,
At whatsoever risk of being defeated:
The ghost stopp'd, menaced, then retired, until
He reach'd the ancient wall, then stood stone still.

CXX.

Juan put forth one arm—Eternal powers!

It touch'd no soul, nor body, but the wall,
On which the moonbeams fell in silvery showers,

Chequer'd with all the tracery of the hall;
He shudder'd, as no doubt the bravest cowers

When he can't tell what 'tis that doth appal.
How odd, a single hobgoblin's non-entity
Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity.⁽⁹⁾ ||

CXXI.

But still the shade remain'd: the blue eyes glared,
And rather variably for stony death:

Yet one thing rather good the grave had spared,
The ghost had a remarkably sweet breath.

A straggling curl show'd he had been fair-hair'd;

A red lip, with two rows of pearls beneath,
Gleam'd forth, as through the casement's ivy shroud
The moon peep'd, just escaped from a gray cloud.

CXXII.

And Juan, puzzled, but still curious, thrust

His other arm forth—Wonder upon wonder!

It press'd upon a hard but glowing bust,

Which beat as if there was a warm heart under.

He found, as people on most trials must,

That he had made at first a silly blunder,
And that in his confusion he had caught
Only the wall, instead of what he sought.

CXXIII.

The ghost, if ghost it were, seem'd a sweet soul
As ever lurk'd beneath a holy hood:
A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory, stole
Forth into something much like flesh and blood;
Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl,
And they reveal'd—alas! that e'er they should!
In full, voluptuous, but *not o'ergrown* bulk,
The phantom of her frolic grace—Fitz-Fulke!

NOTES TO CANTO XVI.

Note 1, page 328, stanza x.

..... *like the old Tyrian vest*
Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.

The composition of the old Tyrian purple, whether from a shell-fish or from cochineal, or from kermes, is still an article of dispute; and even its colour—some say purple, others scarlet: I say nothing.

Note 2, page 341, stanza xliii.

Deeming the sage would be much mortified,
Or thrown into a philosophic passion,
For a spoilt carpet—but the “Attic Bee”
Was much consoled by his own repartee.

I think that it *was* a *carpet* on which Diogenes trod, with—“Thus I trample on the pride of Plato!”—“With greater pride,” as the other replied. But as *carpets* are *meant* to be trodden upon, my memory probably misgives me, and it might be a robe, or tapestry, or a table-cloth, or some other expensive and uncynical piece of furniture.

Note 3, page 342, stanza xlv.

To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail.

I remember that the mayoress of a provincial town, somewhat surfeited with a similar display from foreign parts, did rather indecorously break through the applauses of an intelligent audience—intelligent, I mean, as to music—for the words, besides being in recondite languages (it was some years before the peace, ere all the world had travelled, and while I was a collegian)—were sorely disguised by the performers;—this mayoress, I say, broke out with, “Rot your Italianos! for my part, I loves a simple ballat!” Rossini will go a good way to bring most

people to the same opinion, some day. Who would imagine that he was to be the successor of Mozart? However, I state this with diffidence, as a liege and loyal admirer of Italian music in general, and of much of Rossini's; but we may say, as the connoisseur did of painting, in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, "That the picture would be better painted if the painter had taken more pains."

Note 4, page 346, stanza lix.

For Gothic daring shown in English money.

"Ausu Romano, ære Veneto" is the inscription (and well inscribed in this instance) on the sea walls between the Adriatic and Venice. The walls were a republican work of the Venetians; the inscription, I believe, Imperial; and inscribed by Napoleon the *First*. It is time to continue to him that title—there will be a second by and by, "*Spes altera mundi*," if he live; let him not defeat it like his father. But in any case he will be preferable to the Imbeciles. There is a glorious field for him, if he know how to cultivate it.

Note 5, page 347, stanza lx.

"Untying" squires "to fight against the churches."

"Though ye untie the winds, and bid them fight
Against the churches."—MACBETH.

Note 6, page 359, stanza xcvi.

They err—'tis merely what is call'd mobility.

In French "*mobilité*." I am not sure that mobility is English; but it is expressive of a quality which rather belongs to other climates, though it is sometimes seen to a great extent in our own. It may be defined as an excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions—at the same time without *losing* the part; and is, though sometimes apparently useful to the possessor, a most painful and unhappy attribute.

Note 7, page 361, stanza cii.

Draperied her form with curious felicity!

"*Curiosa felicitas*."—PETRONIUS ARBITER.

Note 8, page 365, stanza cxiv.

*A noise like to wet fingers drawn on glass,
Which sets the teeth on edge.*

See the account of the ghost of the uncle of Prince Charles of Saxony raised by Schroepfer—"Karl—Karl—was—walt wolt mich?"

Note 9, page 367, stanza cxx.

*How odd, a single hobgoblin's non-entity
Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity.*

"———*Shadows to-night*

Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
Than could the *substance* of ten thousand soldiers, &c."

See RICHARD III.

THE END.

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